
L E T T E R S

MORAL AND ENTERTAINING.

P A R T II.

L E T T E R I.

TO LADY SOPHIA, FROM A YOUNG WOMAN OF QUALITY, RELATING THE
OCCASION OF HER LEAVING HER FATHER'S HOUSE.

MADAM,

WHEREVER I am, it will be a pleasure to you, I am persuaded, to know I have found a retreat, entirely to my own satisfaction. The occasion of my flight and concealment, you are partly acquainted with: I found my father inflexible in his resolution of marrying me to a foreigner of great distinction, one of his own principles, a bigotted Papist. My mother, you know, was a strict Protestant, and by her marriage articles had secured her own liberty, and that of educating her daughters in the same profession: I was their only child, carefully instructed in those sacred truths, which, by the assistance of Heaven, I never will renounce, but rather give up my title to all the dazzling advantages the world can tempt me with. It is for this I am a voluntary exile from my father's house, who, after my mother's death, intrenched on my religious liberty, restrained me from the public worship, and forbid me reading my Bible. These severities, with the French match he was treating for me, put me on the desperate adventure of privately quitting his family, and securing my freedom in some humble disguise. No person on earth was privy to my design, but a near relation of my mother's, a person of strict honour and piety, who encouraged me to sacrifice every thing, rather than renounce my faith, or break

my peace with Heaven and my own conscience.

I got the habit of a country girl, and, with this gentleman's assistance, was carried into one of the most fertile countries in England, till we came near a large farm-house, of which he had some knowledge, and there he left me to make my own fortune. I went on with cautious steps till I came to the entrance of a square court, surrounded with a hedge of hawthorn in it's full bloom. Here I met the mistress of the family; she appeared young, and in a clean modest dress was perfectly agreeable: there was something in her aspect so gentle and beneficent, that I could not help being interested in her welfare, from the first moment I saw her.

She was then dealing out the remains of a plentiful table to a company of indigent people, who, with lifted hands and grateful hearts, implored Heaven to reward her in a thousand blessings. A very pretty boy and girl, with sparkling eyes and rosy cheeks, stood hanging on her apron; who, to mimic their mother, gave away all the little treasure they had in their pockets to the beggars children; and then fell a crying, because she would not suffer them to pull off their own shoes and stockings, to give to some that were bare-footed.

As soon as she had dismissed her dependants, I offered my service, and told her

the distresses to which I must be exposed, if she refused me. She perceived my concern was unaffected; and seeing me young, with the bloom of health in my looks, (without any of that impertinent caution I expected) she agreed to receive me into her service. She then happened to want a servant, rather to share with her in the management of a large family, than to be employed in any domestic drudgery. I know not why, but she seemed pleased with me; and I with equal content entered my new station without any melancholy reviews of my past grandeur, the dignity of my birth, or the delicacy of my education. The glorious motive, for which I had resigned the splendid vanities of life, gave an unspeakable alacrity to my mind, and filled it with that ineffable peace that springs from conscious virtue.

Be these celestial consolations mine,
And I the world, with all its pomp, resign.

I did not see my new master till the evening, when he came home, with a train, not of beaus and powdered footmen, but of industrious honest labourers; some of his own household, and others hired by the day, whom he punctually paid at the close of it, repeating that rule of the sacred Scripture—'Thou shalt not sleep with the wages of an hireling.' He is a very grave man, twice the age of his wife, a person of great prudence, and unblemished honesty; very hospitable to strangers, as gentle and compassionate to his servants; country business is his great delight, in the management of which Heaven has blessed him with uninterrupted prosperity, and vast increase.

The farm-house is indeed somewhat antique, but spacious and pleasant: a more agreeable situation cannot be imagined, nor a greater variety of sylvan scenes described in poetry, unless Mr. Thomson's *SPRING and SUMMER SEASONS* could rise in one enchanting prospect. The wide landscape round is all my master's property; his snowy flocks are ranging on the hills, his grazing herds lowing through the plains; the mountains are crowned with the great Creator's bounty, and the vallies made vocal with his praises.

These scenes of innocence and plenty bring back the patriarchal ages to my view, and give me a sort of pious plea-

sure. Methinks I see the plains of Mamre, covered with the wealthy Hebrews flocks and herds; or, shifting the scene, for the fruitful fields of Haran, the beauteous Rachael following her fleecy charge, seems to come in view; Boaz and his reapers appeared to my fancy, in the jovial month of harvest. In that chearful season, here was no wild riot, no rude intemperance; nothing but harmless merriment appeared among any of my master's domesticks. As soon as they enter his service, he gives them a Bible, and *The Practice of Piety*; with strict orders, that they appear constantly on the Lord's Day at the public worship, unless they have such an excuse as they dare carry to the last tribunal.

It will not be incredible to one of your piety, that I can make myself easy in a way of life so different from the gaieties of a court, to which I have been inured. I am not only easy, but really happy: my mistress, who has a sweetness of temper not to be equalled, is fond of me, and leaves me not to be idle, but, which is much better, to chuse my own employment. You know my stature is above the common height; and since I came here, I am rather grown taller, and somewhat more plump, so that a little business does me no manner of harm.

I have entirely put off the fine lady, and all my court airs; I have almost forgot I am an earl's daughter, and should start at the sound of Lady Frances; instead of that, I am plain Rosalinda, without any other appellation, but what the gentle swains now and then give me, of a handsome Lass, or a proper Damsel; with which I am infinitely better pleased, than when I was an Angel, or a Goddess, and impiously addressed in the strains of adoration. If ever I return to the modish world, I must learn to dance again, having perfectly forgot to make my honours: I have made but one courtsey since I came here, and that was to a squire, who, because it was something low, and finished in the twinkling of an eye, caught me by the hand, verily believing I was sinking to the ground in a fainting fit. I am not turned Quaker, but I have laid aside all ceremony, and call every body in the village by their Christian name; except my master and mistress, and the parson of the parish, whom I cannot pass by without telling you,

he is a man of exemplary piety, of universal charity, and a great blessing to this place.

My splendid distinction of being the head servant, as it gives me a pretence to keep my distance, and to be as reserved as I think fit; so it frees me from any drudgery, but what is my own choice; the worst of which is rubbing a long oaken table, that graces the hall, and is kept as bright as a looking-glass. My Saturday's work is dressing four or five spacious chimnies with pionies, holly-oaks, or branches of bays. Some part of my time (and that the most delightful) is spent in rambling the fields with my master's children, the pretty boy and girl I mentioned: while they are following their little sports, I give up my thoughts to some innocent reverie, or pious meditation; to this the view of the fair creation invites me; here the present Deity seems to challenge a natural homage, while he cheers me in the glory of the sun, refreshes me in the fragrant breeze, is beauty in the flowers of the field, and harmony in the nightingale's voice. With a sort of ecstacy, I repeated Milton's Morning Hymn, to which the Italian translation gives new life and musick:

* *Gloriose opre tue tutte son queste
Padre del bene omnipotente: E' tuo
Questo composto universal, cotanto
A meraviglia bello; or qua'l farai
Oggetto di stupor, tu stesso
Ineffabil——*

But I am not always in the sublime; I sometimes descend to gather cowslips and daisies, or pursue some gaudy butterfly, with my pretty companions; or please myself with dressing up their fine flaxen hair with tufts of flowers.

These you will think are very guiltless amusements; and if I should tell you I have an amour, altogether as guiltless, dear Lady Sophia, would you not believe me? I suppose you will ask me, if my charms have captivated the lord of the manor, or a justice of the quorum, or the high sheriff of the county: alas! my ambition sleeps; I should

not aim at these glorious conquests, not even in my best apparel: and in that, I must tell you, I am as fine as any shepherdes in an opera. But if you was to see the gentle youth, that I have the vanity to think sighs for me, you would believe him some poetical form: he is so elegant, so beautiful, that when he appears, the scene is all Arcadia; and (except a certain person with a star and garter) he is the handsomest youth that ever your eyes beheld. Nor will you wonder, when I tell you his descent is from a younger branch of the S—— family, a race remarkable for heroes and beauties. By the extravagance of his ancestors, the estate has been long sunk to about two or three hundred a year: this youth was left from his infancy to the care of his grandmother, and bred as well as her narrow fortune would allow; but it is easy to perceive he owes nothing but to nature, which has given him every advantage, without the vices of a polite education: he is about my own age, hardly turned of nineteen. When I first saw him, he was sitting under a shady beach, with an English *Pastor Fido* in his hand; he appeared like another Adonis, in the softest bloom of life. I cannot describe him better than in the following verses, writ by Lady B——s on another subject:

His faultless shape appear'd with ev'ry grace,
While beauty sat triumphant in his face;
His hair, the palest brown, in ringlets flow'd,
And charms beyond the reach of art bestow'd:
His forehead white as snow, his radiant eyes
The bright celestial blue that paints the skies:
A guiltless blush his blooming cheeks disclose,
The native tincture of an op'ning rose:
His aspect open, artless, and serene,
Reveal'd the spotless mind that dwelt within.

In this perfection of youthful charms, he has all that modesty that rises from a delicacy of thought, and a constant fear of offending. I am so demure and reserved, that he has not the least suspicion of my partiality for him; nor dares discover his own for me, though he believes his station so superior to mine: he looks and sighs, but is as silent as your great grandfather's busto that stands on his

* These are thy glorious works, Parent of good!
Almighty! thine this universal frame,
Thus wond'rous fair; thyself how wond'rous then!
Unpeakable——

MILTON'S PAR. LOST, Book V. l. 153.
monument.

monument. I am, indeed, a very great prude, and never gave him an opportunity to speak on this subject; but if I should, the attempt would infallibly suffocate him. He lately brought me a basket of flowers from a little neat garden of his grandmother's; but he stood so long in suspense, with the basket in his hands, that I feared the fragrant blossoms would have been withered, be-

fore he could come to a resolution to let me have them.

He would certainly have presented them to the Queen with more assurance, and a better grace, had he been received with those propitious smiles, which never fail to encourage modest virtue, and scatter every human care.

ROSALINDA.

LETTER II.

TO LADY SOPHIA, FROM THE SAME.

NOT bubbling fountains to the thirsty swain, were ever more welcome, dear Lady Sophia, than your letter to me; nothing can be more solemn than the profession of your friendship, nor more agreeable than your raillery on my gallant. He may be, as you imagine, one of Count Gabalis's *Sylphs*, or some gentle spirit of the vale, propitious to virtuous lovers; or of the number of the *Sylvan Genii*, with whom he seems to converse more than with any thing of human race: I have seldom seen him, but either walking in some verdant inclosure, under a hedge-row of shady trees, or sitting with a flute in his hand, by some purling rivulet, mimicking the nightingale's pensive note; while the melting music glides along the stream, and echoes through the flowery dale. In one of my rambles with my little mistress, I followed the course of a pretty cascade, which fell from an easy descent, and led me to a natural bower of trees, whose branches mingling at the top, formed a lofty arch, and excluded the noon-day's sultry beams: I entered the silent retreat, with as much veneration as if it had been sacred to some invisible power; but how great was my surprize, when I saw the lovely youth reclined on a mossy bank, lost in downy sleep! the verdant couch was canopied over with ivy, twining with honey-suckles.

Never did any thing human appear so beautiful! A blush, like the rosy morning, painted his face, while smiles of peace and conscious innocence seemed to bless the golden slumber: I gazed for a few moments, with the same guiltless delight, as an ethereal being would inspire; and then softly withdrew.

If he is, as you flatter me, some bright inhabitant of the air, the purity of my

passion is very agreeable to a lover of that kind; it is a harmless lambent flame that plays about my heart, and gives me no manner of uneasiness; it is such a sanctity of affection, as neither interrupts nor profanes my devotion; it has something more than the tenderness of friendship, and less than the warmth and violence of passion; and seems, like the dictates of guiltless nature, to soften the fatigue of my new station.

These refinements, Lady Sophia, will, I fear, be a little incredible to you, who are dazzled with the lustre of a Duke's coronet, and have placed your affections on mortal charms.

I am now come to the serious part of your letter: I know that religion is the governing principle of your actions; which makes me the more surprized that you should persuade me to put myself on the hazard of a second trial. Are you sure, that neither the flattery nor threatenings of my father will prevail with me to renounce the reformed religion, and perjure myself, by giving my vows to a man my soul detests? Do you think the sparks of vanity and ambition are extinguished in my breast? That greatness and pleasure have no charms? Or that the tender affection I have for my father will ever be effaced? Oh! Lady Sophia, if you knew the anguish it cost me, to break through these soft, these powerful engagements, you would not persuade me to quit this peaceful retreat, and put the event on another trial.

Your care for me seems confined to this world, whatever becomes of me in the next: could you meet me again, shining in the drawing-room, or sparkling in the ring, it would perhaps content you; though I never glittered among the stars, nor was admitted into the celestial assem-

assemblies. If I lost the music of the spheres, I suppose your heart would be at rest, could I once more hear the transporting sound of—a *Title*, and be restored to my lost dignity: and yet the possession of these privileges never put me in an ecstasy; nor can I help fancying, Rosalinda has as musical a sound as Lady Frances: I never found a spell in those right honourable syllables for an aching head, or an heavy heart: my Ladyship finds as great satisfaction in ranking a set of *Delft* dishes on a free-stone chimney-piece, as ever I had in disposing my fine China on an Indian cabinet.

A clean Cambrick cap, and an Holland gown wrought with natural flowers, is the top of my finery; in which I like myself as well, and think I look as handsome, as when I was dressed in brocades and jewels for a birth-night. Indeed, that happy occasion always gave an alacrity to my thoughts, and carried me through the glorious toil with pleasure: but I have a mind as easy and innocent now, as when burthened with those costly ornaments; a red cross-knot, a glass necklace, and flowers in my bosom, are

the only useless parts of my dress; which is either the gift of nature, or honestly paid for; in which I am a thousand times more happy than I should be in borrowed finery, at the expence of some industrious trader's ruin, and that of his whole family.

You find, Lady Sophia, I am very well at ease, and enjoy a perfect tranquillity, in this humble station: it was a principle truly rational and divine, that induced me to give up all the splendid distinctions of my birth, the ease and delicacy to which I had been accustomed, rather than basely deny those sacred truths, to which my soul religiously assented, and whose divine articles some of my glorious ancestors have signed with their blood.

Instead of looking back with regret on my past grandeur, the resignation gives me a taste of celestial joy; the songs of angels could not soothe me with softer harmony, than what results from the secret approbation of my own reason; and while all within is peaceful and serene, whether I am in a palace or cottage, my happiness is secure. ROSALINDA.

LETTER III.

TO LADY SOPHIA, FROM THE SAME.

YOUR advice, dear Lady Sophia, is without question well meant, but I dare not follow it: my father is so far from relenting, that I have had intelligence since I came here, that he has sworn, by all that is holy, unless I will marry Count Altamont, and embrace the Romish religion, he will settle his whole estate on some monastery at his decease.

This was what I expected; and I am sure you will not persuade me to renounce Heaven, and damn myself, for the sordid purchase of eighty thousand pounds; nor would you considerately advise me to hazard a celestial advancement for a gilded coronet, or prefer the flattery of mistaken mortals to the approbation of Angels: they have been witnesses of my pious vows; and should I violate my faith, and turn apostate to Heaven, those Ministers of light would bring in their awful evidence, and stand my accusers at the last dreadful tribunal: and can you in earnest think it the effect

of wisdom and just reflection, to dare the menaces of divine justice, rather than incur my father's unmerited resentment? Such I must term it, having found his affections intirely alienated before I left him: there is full evidence he was pleased with my flight, and takes no thought of making any enquiry about it.

But Heaven can witness with what reluctance I have torn myself from the sight of this unnatural parent; what anguish, what pangs of affection, it cost me! This was the most difficult part of my conquest; the delicacy and softness to which I had been inured, the éclat of birth and quality, reputation and esteem of my friends, I resigned with some degree of fortitude: but here nature with specious arguments opposed, and had triumphed in my prediction, unassisted by the sacred Oracles; to them I applied in this perplexity, and received aid from their heavenly illuminations. Here I found it by Eternal Truth determined,

terminated—'He that loveth father or mother more than me, is not worthy of me.'—I worshipped, and obeyed the celestial dictates.

This was no rash inconsiderate action, but the effect of reason and design: after having counted the cost, I found the odds to be infinite; the damage was momentary, the recompence unlimited and immense.

'Tis finish'd now, the great deciding part;
The world's subdued, and Heav'n has all my heart.

Earth's gaudy shews, and pomp of courts, adieu!
For ever now I turn my eyes from you.

What can the world, what can the artifice of hell propose, to tempt me to relinquish my choice! What could they lay in the balance against the sovereign good! what could they offer as an equivalent to the favour of the infinite Divinity, whose smiles enlighten the realms of joy, and fill the celestial inhabitants with unutterable ecstasy! Ask those happy Spirits, who know what the light of his countenance imports, what should buy one moment's interval of their bliss:—Ask some radiant Cherub, amidst his flaming raptures, at what price he values his enjoyment:—And when they have named the purchase, Earth and Hell may try to balance my glorious expectations—

Pleasure would court in vain, and beauty smile,
Glory in vain my wishes would beguile;
The persecutor's rage I would not fear!
Let Death in ev'ry horrid form appear,
And with his keenest darts my breast assail;
When breath, and ev'ry vital spring, shall fail,
This sacred flame on brighter wings shall rise,
And unextinguish'd reach it's native skies.

A thousand times blest be that propitious Power, who from the plenitude of bliss, and the highest exaltation of glory, descended to low mortality; and by his own great example and sufferings animated my breast with this divine fortitude, and marked a way to victory and immortal honour. How sincerely I have followed the heavenly illumination, my witness is within, and my record on high. My father, I know, is inexorable, and has cut me off from his paternal care, and all the privileges of my birth; but while I look forward to the bright recompence prepared for suffering virtue, this loss fits lightly on my soul.

But friendship with a stronger force detains me: here my soul is in suspense. —Dear Lady Sophia, how shall I speak my last adieu? I feel the pangs of separation, an anguish beyond all the emphasis of human learning to utter.—Adieu! we must meet no more, 'till the course of nature is dissolved, and the sun has measured his last radiant circle round the skies.

ROSALINDA.

LETTER IV.

TO LAURINDA.

JOIN with me, dear Laurinda, in thanking Heaven, that I am once more returned to the mansion-seat of my forefathers; for had I staid much longer in London, I had certainly left my wits there. Would you believe that my serious retired temper could find charms in a multitude, or my heart be held captive in a splendid circle of a blue garter! That I who have been used to view the stars which glittered over my head in a clear night, should be dazzled with the lustre of an embroidered one! And yet all this has befallen me. I was the other day making a visit to Cleomira, when the Duke of ——'s chariot with three laced footmen behind it stopped at the door: I was at the window, and saw him alight; he is really a handsome man, but his

charms were extremely increased by the pomp which surrounded him; and the respectful awe with which his attendants approached him, heightened the majesty of his appearance; his legs were formed into the exactest symmetry by the magnificent clocks of his stockings. The deference which was paid him at his first coming into the room, taught me to look upon him as something above the race of mortals, which I had been used to converse with. When I had time to consider his face, I found it received a much greater addition from a fair wig loaded with powder, than it could have done from artless ringlets of the most lovely hair. After he had sat a little, he asked Cleomira to go with him to his house, to see a fine set of hangings, which were just

just come over from the Gobelins: she excused herself, as being obliged to stay and entertain me; but he asked me to be of the party; and as soon as Cleomira's coach was ready, we all went together. But if I was charmed with the sparkling chariot and embroidered coat, I was enchanted with the house; the lofty roofs, the painted stair-case, and gilded wainscot, struck me with a pleasure I had never felt; however, it was an unquiet joy, and I longed to be at home; for I thought myself in a dangerous situation. As soon as Cleomira had set me down at my lodgings, I immediately set about packing up my things; and the very next morning, in the height of my ecstacy, left London and all its pomp behind me: but how are either my eyes or every object altered since I have been absent! The house used to appear a handsome ancient building, but now I find it only a Gothick heap of stone; the ceilings are so low, that I am afraid of knocking my brains out; and the entry so narrow, that if I should meet any body, I should certainly run back again, for fear of being squeezed against the wall in endeavouring to pass. I went to pull down the venerable pictures of my ancestors, because they were not painted in Italy: the bow-windows terrify me, and must be changed into Venetian ones; for there is no bearing the light which strikes through so unfashionable a piece of architecture. The rosy daughters of the

neighbouring 'squires are become in my eyes awkward figures, and there is something so ungenteel and coarse in such an exuberance of health, that I cannot bear to look at them: the young men of the village appear downright bumpkins, and I cannot perceive any beauty in the cheerful bloom of their countenances, or just proportion of their shape, through the melancholy disguise of unpowdered locks, and plain broad-cloth apparel; if they talk to me, I am amazed how a man has the assurance to open his mouth anywhere who has not a right to speak in the House of Peers, and can never comprehend how any thing worth communicating can enter into a head which was never circled with a coronet. Sentences which are uttered by plain Cleon have no force; though perhaps the same words would have all the charms of eloquence, if pronounced by an Earl.

You see I am not very happy at present in the society of my old acquaintance; but I hope this delicacy will soon wear off, or I shall not be able to behave myself patiently among a set of people, with whom I have formerly spent many happy hours.

Adieu, my dear Laurinda: my politeness will not lessen, but increase the value I set upon your friendship; since I am sure the Beau Monde would approve me for being unalterably *your's*, &c.

LAVINIA.

LETTER V.

THE SEQUEL OF THE STORY OF SYLVIA, IN THE THIRD LETTER IN THE FIRST PART OF LETTERS MORAL AND ENTERTAINING.

TO BELINDA.

MADAM,

YOUR suspicions are too just, of the occasion of my late sickness: I have waited with great impatience for the satisfaction of disclosing the secrets of my soul to you; but my strength would no sooner permit me to give you this proof of my obedience to your commands, and the confidence I have in your fidelity.

Why was I formed with these soft inclinations, this fatal propensity to love! How happy are you, who amidst the gayest advantages of youth and fortune, can act with such a graceful regularity,

and govern your passions with an absolute command, free from those tender emotions which interrupt the felicity of my life!

I spent the last winter in the country with my father, whose pious instructions, confirmed by his own practice, directed me to a refined and immortal happiness: nor could any invitations from the Comtesse de R——, nor all my brother's importunity, prevail with me to quit a retirement where I found so much peace and unmolested tranquillity. My criminal passion for Monsieur le Comte

M

— seemed

— seemed perfectly extinguished, and gave place to a nobler attachment; Heaven had all my vows, thither with a divine ambition my soul aspired: this sacred ardour like incense mingled with the morning fragrance, and cheered the evening shades; the whispering brooks and sylvan retreats witnessed to the heavenly flame; where, in language like this, I often addressed the invisible, but present Divinity:

‘ O thou, whom unseen I love, tell
‘ me by what gentle influence thou dost
‘ attract my desires. These eyes have
‘ never seen thy lovely face, no accent
‘ of thy voice has reached my ear; and
‘ yet thou art more intimate to my soul
‘ than any of the objects of sense: to thee
‘ I tell my inmost care, and open every
‘ grief; while some heavenly gale dis-
‘ pels the gloom, and breathes eternal
‘ peace and fragrance on my soul.

Not blest Arabia, when her spices flow,
And load the western breezes with their spoils,
Is half so sweet; nor half so sweet the breath
Of op’ning roses, when the dewy morn
Renews the garden’s pride, while the glad sun
Calls out the blooming life of ev’ry flow’r.

‘ My wishes fly beyond the bounds of
‘ this low creation, and terminate in
‘ Thee, the spring of fresh and ever-
‘ blooming joys! ’Tis Thee, abstractly
‘ Thee, oh uncreated beauty, that I
‘ love! not as a miser loves his wealth,
‘ or the ambitious his grandeur; not as
‘ the libertine loves his pleasure, or the
‘ generous man his friend: these are
‘ flat similitudes, and would profane the
‘ sacred ardour; but thou can’st read the
‘ unutterable thought, and explain the
‘ secret meaning of my soul: search it’s
‘ inmost recesses; and if thou findest any
‘ competitor there, remove the darling
‘ vanity, and blot every name but thine
‘ from my heart.’

In this elevation, my dear Belinda, would you not think me secure from mortal charms? Could one of your equal temper conceive there was such an easy transition from devotion to love—mere earthly love! Would the most uncharitable person in the world have said, that from this sublime situation I should in a few moment quit the skies, and bid the angels farewell!

But such was the event. My brother coming hastily to me into the garden, where I was walking, told me the Comte

de R— intended him the honour of a visit, and would be with us the next morning: he left me immediately, without observing the consternation I was in, or giving himself any trouble about my panick or vapours.

I knew not what or where I was; the celestial scenes that had just before engaged my contemplation vanished; the heavens were no more; Paradise, with all it’s glories, disappeared like a fairy vision; my flight was finished, and I sunk to low mortality again. I asked myself if I were asleep or awake, in my right senses or out of my wits; whether I really knew my own name, and was indeed the happy person that a few minutes before had looked with indifference or contempt on all the gay allurements of the world? In this confusion I stood as if I had been fixed to the place by a spell, till my father sent for me to consult about some family affairs, as he had always done since my mother’s death.

The Comte’s visit was wholly intended to my brother; they were engaged in the most perfect friendship, founded on resembling virtues, and an equal abhorrence of every kind of vice: it was a full year since I had seen him; it was probable he never suspected my folly, nor once imagined the cause of my retirement; this yielded me some satisfaction, and gave me hopes I should conceal my guilty passion.

But I was undeceived the moment the lovely youth arrived; an innate grandeur gave a dignity to his mien; the splendour of virtue brightened his aspect; there was something in his whole behaviour so benign and engaging, that I found it impossible to resist the soft insinuation; the pleasing delirium entirely possessed me, and I betrayed myself by a thousand inadvertencies. However, I had some pauses of discretion, and started with horror at my own injustice; my soul was full of anxiety, to think how I should bear this inward struggle for the seven or eight days which the Comte intended to stay, the first of which was not yet past.

The summer was now in it’s pride; and as soon as the evening made walking pleasant, my brother conducted his agreeable guest through a variety of charming walks to an artificial grotto: the top was round and lofty, painted with a beautiful sky, hung with a great number of
little

little crystal sconces formed like stars; in the midst there was placed one larger than the rest, shaped like a crescent: the sides of this fine cavity were rock-work, adorned with branches of coral, mother-of-pearl, and a great variety of counterfeit gems, sparkling among the well-imitated cliffs of marble: it was paved in flowers with a kind of mosaick work; the seats were shaped like little banks, covered with green velvet instead of moss. In this enchanting retreat a supper was ordered, attended with an exquisite concert of voices and instruments; Milton's Morning Hymn was sung, and several of the solemnest Italian compositions. The whole performance was noble and pathetic, while the gardens and groves around returned a thousand soft melodious echoes.

The grave music was exactly suited to the charming stranger's genius; and yet, through the whole evening, never did any thing appear so abstract, so listless, and so inattentive. As soon as the entertainment was over, and the company withdrawn, (except my brother) he begged to be excused from staying a week, as he designed, and that he might be suffered to return the next morning; which, after some apologies on both sides, was agreed.

I was so ill in the morning, that it prevented my seeing the Comte, who could not but discover the unhappy conquest he had made, and certainly left us so suddenly, to free me from such a criminal perplexity, or to stifle the same kindling guilt in his own breast: this last was what my brother believed, and thought it as glorious an instance of virtue and friendship, as it was possible for a man in the warmth of youthful passion to give.

Whatever it was, my disorder increased, until it came to a dangerous fever; death was now in view; my tender cares, and fancied distresses, were lost in a more important concern; the little amusements of the world vanished like dreams; a hovering mist veiled the face of nature, and darkened all its beauty; nor could any sound of joy cheer the sullen hours: I was on the confines of the grave, entering the habitations of the dead; this prospect had a solemnity in it, beyond whatever I conceived in the hours of health.

Think, vain fond heart, when on the steep
Of that tremendous awful deep,

Eternity, in sad suspense I stood,
How all my trifling hopes and fears,
My senseless joys, and idle tears,

Vanish'd at prospect of the frightful flood!
I stood shivering on the brink, looking forward with a dreadful curiosity; all before me was hid in darkness, and impenetrable secrecy; the great experiment was untried, the region of spirits strange and unknown; it was yet, perhaps, an uncertainty, on which my hopes depended; the grand question, whether I should be happy or miserable for ever was yet undecided; I was startled at a mere possibility of being shut out of the starry courts, and excluded from the illustrious assembly of happy immortals.

Indeed I had no intervals of despair, my hopes and fears were equally balanced; no allowed or unrepented crime pressed my soul: Virtue had been my early and deliberate choice, the superior design and governing spring of all my conduct. I hope I had made some preparation for death, and had often meditated on the serious subject; but it was in the hours of perfect health and vivacity; I had never before groaned on a sick bed; these solemnities were new, and infinitely more awful than I had ever conceived.

Death threatened me now at a disadvantage, in a crisis of folly, an unusual disorder of mind; sickness and pain gave every thing a gloomy aspect, and heightened even natural frailties into the blackest guilt; while the grisly monarch stood insulting before me, and drew his sable curtains round my bed; but a superior power rescued me from his ravenous jaws, and bid me live, to speak my great Deliverer's praise.

This sickness has given me another set of thoughts; my apprehensions of dying are as different from what they were before, as the evidence of waking certainties are from the airy illusions of a dream: my notions were once very gay and romantick; I fancied I should take my final leave of the world with an exceeding good grace, and bid adieu very sedately to all the vanities beneath the sun: 'till it came to a trial, I was for making my exit in the full bloom of my youth, and quitting the stage in the most becoming manner. While the fatal mo-

ment appeared at a distance, I was delighted with such images of mortality as the author of the following verses has described, and with great gaiety repeated these lines:

Indulgent Death, prepare thy gentle dart,
To strike a willing and unguarded heart:
Where are thy dreadful looks, and gloomy train?

Fantastick mortals all these terrors feign:
Thou hast an angel's smile, and heav'nly grace;

I find transporting beauties in thy face,
And yield unforc'd, unto thy cold embrace. }
I come a joyful captive to thy arms;
This moment has for me ten thousand charms:

For thee all human things I here resign;
My spotless faith, and virgin vows, are thine.

Myrtillo's sighs, and Sylvia's tears in vain
In these dull regions would my soul retain:
Forbear your fruitless grief; I go to prove
Unbounded pleasures, and immortal love:
Oh, let me unmolested close my eyes;
We'll meet again in yonder blissful skies!

Young virgins haste, a flow'ry wreath prepare,
And dress with guiltless ornaments my hair;

Adorn me with the summer's painted pride,
And lay the vestments of the dead aside;
Nor let a pensive look or mournful tear,
To cloud the lustre of your eyes, appear:
Each nymph be dress'd in robes of spotless light,

The folding streaming fair with silver white;
Let smiles on all your lovely faces shine,
Nor at my glorious destiny repine:
With decent joy conduct me to the tomb,
And hang your garlands round my solitary room.

This is to expire in heroicks, to give up the ghost with a poetical decorum, and to be interred *à-la-moded Arcadia*. Such sentiments as these may pleasingly amuse the mind in the hours of health and serenity; but it requires a strength superior to all human fortitude to support the soul in the agonies of separation; there the aids of reason and nature fail; only a power Divine can disperse the fatal gloom, and brighten it into celestial day.

This long letter is owing to your own curiosity, and must be the excuse of, Madam, *yours, &c.*

SYLVIA.

LETTER VI.

TO LETICIA, GIVING AN ACCOUNT OF THE DEATH OF AMANDA.

I Am just returned from paying my last ceremony to the remains of the late beautiful Amanda. The surprising state in which for several weeks the corpse lay, the richness of the coffin, or the pomp with which she was interred, could no way disguise from my thoughts the melancholy circumstances that attended the last scene of her life: I never think of the manner of her death, but a thousand terrors rise in my imagination, to reproach me for joining with the rest of her flatterers, in concealing her danger, and soothing her with hopes of recovery, till death convinced her of the fatal delusion.

On this subject I hope you will give me leave to be serious: my youth, which you so often object against the gravity of my temper, is no argument in this case; the fair Amanda was still younger, and yet, after all her bloom and vivacity, I saw her a pale and senseless carcase.

How lately did this celebrated thing
Shine in the box, and sparkle in the ring!

It is true the mouldering clay, by a stately monument, is distinguished from vulgar dust; but how poor a consolation is that to an immortal spirit, fated to endless misery, or unbounded joy!

You may laugh, and in poor wild wit ridicule these solemn reflections, and lampoon me with the character of a saint; but, my dear Leticia, this mirth would be more unseasonable and ridiculous than my morals: however, I am more charitable than to accuse you of such levity.

Since you have put me, by your own commands, on this melancholy account, I hope it will be for your advantage when you come to act the closing part of life.

I told you, in my last letter, the accidental reason of being in the same house with Amanda, and her full resolution not to go into the country, however necessary it was for her health; no argument could prevail with her to quit the amusements of the town, in which she had always a share, 'till the positive order of

of her physicians confined her from going abroad. Her distemper was lingering, but incurable; this, in my hearing, the doctor owned to her elder sister, in whose family she was: he told us, that he thought two or three months would be the utmost limits of her life, which he begged might be concealed, and that we would keep her as chearful as possible; but the natural gaiety of her temper prevented that care, for her business was to get rid of time and leisure. She could not go to the masquerade, but took care to let her acquaintance know how welcome their appearance, in every fantastick disguise, would be in her own apartment: she languished after the delights of the stage; but, to supply that, orders were given for some farce or comedy to be read for her diversion. Sometimes a game at picquet passed away the tedious moments; she has often kept the cards in her hands 'till a swooning fit interrupted the important affair. This, you will think, was a pious preparation for the last change! a glorious manner of concluding the action of human life!

Her beauty was as much her joy and contemplation as ever: she was exceeding pale; but there was a certain elegance in her features, and something so peculiarly charming in her air, that triumphed over her indisposition; and to give a flush to her complexion, she had prevailed with her sister to change her window-curtains, which were yellow silk, for some of a bright crimson. Her toilet took up as much of her time as her strength would permit; the adjusting a becoming and modish undress would sometimes so exhaust her spirits, that she was forced to pause, and leave the mighty task unfinished: it was but two days before she died, that she ordered the most fashionable *deshabille* to be sent for from France; as if designed to expire genteelly, and appear polite, even in the languishments of death.

Her sister, though many years older, under the influence of the same unhappy education, indulged the vanity of her inclination in every punctilio; whatever was the consequence, the dying fair must be diverted from every thing that was reasonable and serious: one would wonder her invention could find such a series of impertinencies; monkeys, parrots, buffoons, soft musick, and tender songs, were always ready to entertain

every little interval of ease or strength the poor unthinking patient had.

This to me was the most melancholy scene in the world; I have forced a smile, when my heart has been inwardly bleeding with grief and compassion: not a day passed but, with tears streaming from my eyes, I importuned Marina to let her sister know her danger, and to send for a neighbouring clergyman of great piety, sometimes to pray with her, and, at least, to acquaint her, she was not immortal; that it was possible for her to die, as well as other people.

This advice she rejected, as positively as if I had persuaded her to send for an executioner, to dispatch her sister into the next world: 'Then, Madam,' said I, 'at least forbear to distract and hinder her from every serious reflection.'

'Serious reflection! my dear Emily,' she replied, 'where have you learnt this cant? How long have you practised that faintly air? Look into the glass, and see if you can forbear laughing at yourself; would you have me put on that precise look, and murder my sister, by telling her that she had but a month to live! It would infallibly throw her into the agonies of death: you cannot be so barbarous to give me this advice! You know what effect our pious fraud had, of putting St. Austin's Meditations into her hands, instead of Otway's Plays; the accidental opening it at a meditation on death had almost thrown her into a convulsion. But this,' continued she, 'is the effect of your strange notions. You represent the Supreme Being in such a gloomy view, that it makes you perfectly superstitious: my thoughts, I confess, are more light-some and free; I believe the mercies of Heaven unbounded, and that there is nothing in these little gaieties offensive to God, or injurious to man: nor, indeed, is a future state of punishment any part of my creed; I make no question but my sister will be insensible or happy whenever she dies, and it shall be my business to make her so the short space she has to live, which may be a month or two longer, by the doctor's conjectures the last visit he made. Come,' added she, 'you must go with me, and endeavour to divert her; but pray put off that sanctified aspect, and

‘and try to look a little more like an inhabitant of this world.’

I could not refuse attending her to Amanda’s apartment, whom we found in a musing melancholy posture; which to divert, Marina told her, she looked exceeding well, and nothing could be more genteel than the *deshabille*, in which she appeared. This a little brightened the chagrin on her visage, and made her something attentive to the pranks of a new monkey, which her page had just introduced to divert his fair mistress; who, in the midst of the recreation, was seized with a fainting fit, sunk back in an easy chair, and, after a few hours convulsive pangs, gave up the ghost.

I have been so particular in this account, in hopes it will have a lasting influence on your conduct; and, by being faithful to my living friend, I may atone, if possible, for my insincerity to the dead. I have a thousand and a thousand times reproached myself, for not letting Amanda plainly know her danger; leaving the event to Heaven. I am convinced it was my duty, in spite of all the false rules by which the friendship of this world is guided.

These two sisters had the misfortune, in their early years, to lose their mother, and were left to the conduct of a father, who made it his pride to think and live freely: he looked on all religion as a state policy, and put the Bible and Alcoran on a level; with these principles he perverted his daughters minds, and, except observing the strictest forms of honour and reputation, they were governed by no rule but their caprice, and the fashions of the age. Thus they saw their father live, and thus they saw him die, entirely negligent, and thoughtless of any thing beyond the period of human life: instead of prayers and pious

meditations, one of his libertine companions read Dryden’s translation of Lucretius to him in his last hours; while fearless and insensible he met death and all its succeeding horrors.

Amanda’s death has made a deep impression on my thoughts; I have bid the modish world adieu, and am now retired to my brother’s country seat. You may call it the spleen, but I hope it is the effect of just reasoning, that I have never read any thing since I came hither, but books of devotion. Mr. Law’s excellent Treatise of Christian Perfection has been instructive to me. The character of Miranda has raised a noble emulation in my mind, though I despair of reaching that perfection.

If you make me a visit, you will not find me engaged in cards at one-and-thirty, nor telling riddles, or drawing valentines with my country neighbours; but musing by the side of a gentle cascade, or sitting in some fragrant bower, listening to the songs of Heaven in Dr. Watts’s pious numbers.

Hark! how beyond the narrow bounds
Of time and space they run,
And speak in most majestic sounds
The Godhead of the Son;

How on the Father’s breast he lay,
The darling of his soul,
Infinite years before the day,
Or heavens began to roll.

And now they sink their lofty tone,
And milder notes they play;
And bring th’ eternal Godhead down,
To dwell in humble clay.

If this long letter should give you the spleen, I hope it will be your advantage; nothing but that is the intention of, Madam, *your most humble servant*,

EMILIA.

LETTER VII.

THE ANSWER TO EMILIA.

YOUR letter, I hope, will be a restraint on the great levity of my temper: the account of Amanda’s death will leave me without excuse, if I should carry my vanity so far as to act the last part of life with so little propriety. I cannot, without the warmest gratitude to Heaven, reflect on the advantage of a

different education and principles, which I hope will never be effaced from my soul.

But, my dear Emilia, I shall never be so good as you would have me, nor as I sincerely desire to be: I have yet some tender engagements to break, before I bid adieu to the world, and rank myself

myself in the number of departed spirits; I cannot on a sudden contract such intimacies with invisible beings, as to abandon all my material acquaintance. I despair of following you and Miranda, who, if you were Roman Catholicks, are in a fair way of being canonized (as many a miserable sinner has been before you.) Of whatever religion I am, it is certain I shall never be numbered in the same class with St. Winefrid.

You love poetry, and it is a pleasure to me to oblige you with any thing writ on a subject so agreeable to your taste, as these verses inscribed to Mrs. M——, a person of strict piety, though she does not turn recluse, and live in a grotto, but converses freely with the polite world, and keeps an unblemished character in it. I will leave you now to your shady retreats and murmuring brooks.

ON SOLITUDE.

INSCRIBED TO MRS. M——.

YE groves, and flow'ry vales, in you we find
The first unblemish'd joys for man design'd;
Your charming scenes th' attentive mind
supply

With pleasure in it's nice variety:
Nature does here her virgin smiles afford,
And shews us Paradise again restor'd;
Our souls their former harmony acquire,
And vexing care and conscious guilt retire.

Propitious Solitude! thou kind retreat
From all the vain amusements of the great!
In thee alone, without disgust we prove
The endless sweets of innocence and love:
Beauty and wit may find a refuge here,
Unenvy'd ev'n Belinda might appear;
Each nymph would yield the uncontested
prize,

And ev'ry swain pay homage to her eyes.
Flourish, ye gentle shades, and rural seats;
Let endless verdure deck your soft retreats;
Peace dwell upon your banks, ye silver
streams,
The Muses chaste delights, and constant
themes!

For ever you the poet's breast inspire,
With sprightly joys, and wake the golden
lyre.

Retir'd in fragrant bow'rs, the Hebrew
King,
For Pharaoh's daughter, touch'd the tuneful
string;
The fair Egyptian's charms his soul possess,
And fill'd with sacred ecstasies his breast;
Celestial numbers melted from his tongue,
In human figures truths divine were sung,

While Lebanon's high cedars lent an ear,
And Siloe rose above it's banks to hear;
Hermon and Carmel kept the pleasing lay,
And Sharon's painted vale appear'd more gay.

What pow'r, enchanting Solitude, is thine!
That men, for thee, the dearest ties resign:
For thee the monarch lays his crown aside,
And the young lover quits his weeping bride;
The hero gives the chase of honour o'er,
And fame and glorious conquest tempt no
more;
The softer sex, with fearless piety,
To woods and savage wilds have follow'd
thee.

Fair Magdalen the flatt'ring world declin'd,
And to a narrow cave her charms confin'd:
In Herod's wanton court admir'd she shone,
And all the tempting paths of vice had known;
To her's, the beauties of the Hebrew race,
Rachael and Tamar's boasted fame, gave
place:

Love triumph'd in her voice, her looks, and
mien,

And love in all her fatal form was seen;
A thousand youthful hearts her pow'r obey'd,
And homage to her soft dominion paid:
But thus in Nature's gayest bloom admir'd,
A penitent she gloriously retir'd;
Her costly ornaments are laid aside,
With all the vain address of female pride:
Her hair neglected, o'er her bosom flow'd,
And charms beyond the reach of art bestow'd;
A mourning robe she wore, a pensive grace,
And soft remorse, sat on her lovely face;
A vaulted rock for her retreat she chose,
Among the cliffs a murm'ring fountain rose;
Here contemplation, pray'r, and lofty praise,
In solemn order measur'd out her days:
To Heav'n her vows with early ardour fled,
Before the Sun his morning glories spread;
When from his height he pour'd down
golden streams,

Her wing'd devotion met his noon-day beams;
Till in the west with fainter light he shone,
Untir'd the heav'nly votary went on:
The Moon serene in midnight splendour sat,
With countless Stars, attending on her state;
The cares and noisy business of the day,
In rest, and soothing dreams, dissolv'd away;
The drowsy waters crept along the shore,
And shepherds pin'd upon the banks no more;
The trees their whispers ceas'd, the gentle
gale

No longer danc'd along the dewy vale;
The peaceful echoes, undisturb'd with sound,
Lay slumb'ring in the cavern'd hills around;
Faction and care, and midnight riot slept;
But still the lovely saint her holy vigils kept.

If you could but find such a convenient habitation as this, it would be to
your

your heart's content: for my part, I shall never hide my virtue in obscurity; it shall not be my fault if the world is not instructed by my example. But to be serious, I verily believe we have both the same important interests in view, though we are so different in our tempers; we never meet but it puts me in

mind of the two weeping and laughing Philosophers. The very same cause has often had the opposite effect on our dispositions; but in spite of this seeming contradiction, that sacred amity by which we are united shall never be violated by,

Madam, *your obedient humble servant*,
LETICIA.

LETTER VIII.

TO LETICIA, IN ANSWER TO THE FOREGOING LETTER.

IF you have heard of my brother's death, you can be no stranger to the excess of my grief. The Poem you sent came very seasonably; in the Fair Penitent I found a plan of life suited to my melancholy temper; which has found more relief by a sort of visionary consolation than from all the efforts of reason: you have often thought fit to divert me with your sleeping as well as waking reveries, and I know I cannot oblige you more than by relating this uncommon dream.

Whether it was the excursion of fancy, or whether the scene was disposed by an angel, I cannot determine; but as I was sitting in a summer-house, my usual retreat in an afternoon, reading Milton's Elegy on Lycidas, a downy slumber closed my eyes, and sunk my sorrows in the pleasing oblivion.

I found myself in a place gay as the poet's description of the Cyprian groves: beneath an inviting shade I rested on a bank of violets, and without surprise saw my brother in a glittering habit, and beautiful beyond the race of men, approaching; he seated himself by me, and with a smile of celestial charity thus began:

'It is with the highest satisfaction, my dear sister, I come to give you a relation that will animate your virtue. As you assisted mine in a state of mortal imperfection, you know I had some intervals of doubt, and nature shrunk at the entrance of the gloomy valley; the darkness was untried and impenetrable: but how great was my surprise, when I found this momentary night succeeded by an eternal noon! while my Guardian Angel, with an aspect of ineffable sweetness, bid me follow him.

'I obeyed: in an instant the earth

'was lost to my view; the sun diminished to a star; innumerable worlds were past, with a speed swifter than a morning ray; the gates of heaven now appeared, and at the angel's command rolled back on their golden hinges: but what glories were disclosed, no language on earth can describe: Omnipotence and infinite Wisdom seemed without limits here to have been exerted; through enchanting groves I traced the delicious borders, where the fountains of life pour out their streams; passing from one scene of wonders to another, ardent to pay my homage, I pressed forward to the sacred throne.

'The Supreme Benignity at once beamed forth on me: lost in ecstasy, I fell prostrate before my Sovereign, when with accents that breathed immortal joy and harmony, he bid me rise to perfect purity and bliss.

'A starry tiara was placed on my head, and a golden lute in my hand; I mingled with the grand assembly, the thousand times ten thousand ransomed from every language and tribe on earth: with them I joined my grateful tribute to the great Benefactor of mankind, whose sufferings and death have given me acceptance, victory, and life; I rejoiced in God my Saviour; I triumphed in the height of his exaltation; infinite Majesty, softened by equal love, appeared in his form, the brightness of the Divinity, the joy of Heaven, the theme of every celestial song.

'I have made this impression on your sleeping imagination, being permitted to give you no other account of my happiness: be not impatient of the afflictions of life; the whole of your mortal duration is but a moment, to the future recompence; if you live to

'the

' the honour of your Maker, and the
' advantage of your companions on
' earth, it will for ever heighten the
' transports of your joy in the realms of
' light.'

Here with soft melody the pleasing scene vanished: I waked at the imaginary musick, and found it had left a calm and sedate composure in my soul; like a beam from Heaven, it dispersed the gloom, and opened a serene and light-some prospect before me.

—Ye dreary wastes, adieu!
Reason, Religion, now I follow you.
Enough to Nature and the grave are paid:
Behold, the fair celestial scene's display'd.

It appeared too regular for a natural excursion of fancy, but I shall leave that undetermined; amidst all your gaieties, you are as guiltless of incredulity as
your humble servant,

EMILIA.

LETTER IX.

THE ANSWER TO EMILIA.

I Am not surprised, that such a shining vision as you have described, has allayed your grief, and restored the tranquillity of your mind; but I am afraid you are not yet gay enough to excuse the vivacity of my temper, or suffer me to laugh: it is without your consent if I am happy, and very much pleased with any of the transitory vanities of this world; which, I must own, have some prevailing charms for me, from whose soft captivity I cannot yet get free.

I was last night at a play, in which there was the part of a Princess well acted, and the sentiments belonging to the character were just and noble; yet I was not half so well pleased as I had often been before with the same representation: I soon found the reason of my dissatisfaction, and the difference between imitated and real greatness.—— The Princess Royal was at the play, and just in my view: all that elegance and dignity of thought the poet had described brightened her aspect; every virtue was there conspicuous; the gentle, the engaging smile, was beyond the reach of numbers; a thousand nameless graces discovered the innate perfections of her mind, and gave the charming Princess a distinction peculiar to conscious merit, and beyond all imitation.

I intend you a visit before the spring (that fairest season of the year) is past: I am willing to see you once more in this world; for I am not sure we shall meet in the next, though I sincerely desire it; nothing will more contribute to my happiness than your conversation; I catch some emanation of your virtue, and am inspired with new convictions of the va-

nity of the world; my reason gains ground, and my passions subside. I may venture to look grave in your company, but in my present modish way of life I dare not so much as put on an air of thought and reflection, nor seem to have anything in the earth to do, but to amuse myself, and the volatile beings I converse with. You see, if I was wiser than I really am, I should take pains to conceal it, rather than be singular and unfashionable.

I have sent the verses I promised to procure for you.

ON BEAUTY.

Victorious Beauty! by what potent charm
Dost thou the soul of all it's force disarm!
We bless our chains, abhor our liberty,
And yield the uncontested prize to thee:
Whether we rash or calm designs pursue,
Thine is the glorious motive still in view:
For thee we search the wide creation round,
But thou art no where in perfection found;
Some blemish still remains on mortal pride,
And crowding years it's airy boasts deride.

Triumphant Beauty sits in Flavia's eyes;
But while we gaze, the trembling lustre dies.

Bellair's completely form'd with ev'ry
grace,

A faultless shape, and an enchanting face;
In all his motions, each becoming air,
Greatness and native elegance appear;
Careless and free, in life's deluding bloom,
While envious death threatens a hasty doom,
Some gentle mistress, full of love and truth,
Shall soon lament the dear unrivall'd youth.

Thou lovely, fleeting, transitory thing,
From what immense Perfection dost thou
spring!

To what complete Original return,
While we thy short appearance vainly mourn!

N

Howe'er

Howe'er our doating thoughts mistake thy
 way
 To certain bliss, thine is a friendly ray
 That points the passage to unclouded day.
 Ye heavenly forms, in all your pomp ap-
 pear,
 And shew us what immortal beauties are,
 What life, what rosy bloom your faces wear!
 Put on each smiling grace, and conqu'ring
 charm,
 And all the force of mortal love disarm:
 For still our restless thoughts take glorious
 aims,
 Howe'er seduc'd by these inferior flames;
 The leading passion, the supreme desire,
 To things divine and infinite aspire.
 Eternal Excellence! 'tis only Thee
 We search, through Nature's bright variety!
 Our eager wishes, with impetuous force,
 To thee, unknown, direct their endless course;

'Tis thee we seek and love, for thee we pine;
 The powerful charm, the soft attraction's
 thine;
 To thee these sighs, these tender vows ascend,
 Th' unseen Divinity we still attend;
 Sick of these fading toys, our thoughts press on
 To joys untasted, excellence unknown.
 Thou Great Original of all that's fair,
 Whose glories no similitude can bear,
 Before the darting splendour of thy eyes,
 The pride of all created beauty dies!

This I hope is the latent sense of my
 soul, in all it's motions, though I am not
 yet so wise as you would have me, nor
 as I intend to be; but in whatever cha-
 racter you put me, do me the justice to
 believe I am sincerely *your's*, &c.

LETICIA.

LETTER X.

FROM LYSANDER, GIVING A RELATION OF THE TRAGICAL END OF HIS
 VALET DE CHAMBRE.

MY LORD,

YOUR commands shall be punc-
 tually obeyed, whatever reluctance
 I find to enter on this relation, of
 which you have been so imperfectly in-
 formed.

The young *Valet de Chambre*, whose
 story you enquire after, was the same I
 brought out of France, whom you took
 some notice of when I met your Lord-
 ship in my return to England; where I
 was received again into my mother's fa-
 mily, my father being in my absence de-
 ceased.

I had a young sister about fifteen, of
 whom I was always exceeding fond, and
 now thought it my part to see her as ad-
 vantageously married, as her birth and
 fortune required: after I had spent some
 time at home, I proposed several good
 matches for her, every one of which she
 obstinately refused.

This gave me some suspicion of my
valet, who appeared to be a handsome
 youth about eighteen: he had a charm-
 ing voice, and sung to a lute, which he
 touched with surprising skill and sweet-
 ness. My sister loved music, and he was
 always ambitious of entertaining her.
 There was no difficulty to discover her
 inclinations; truth and nature appeared
 in all her actions; but Palanty's conduct
 was past my penetration: however, I
 resolved to part with him, to prevent my

sister's infamy; as dissolute and aban-
 doned as my own manners had been, I
 had the nicest sense of what would touch
 her reputation. With a restless mind I
 was one day walking in my garden, and,
 turning with some precipitation down a
 shady alley, I surprized Palanty reading
 a paper; which suddenly snatching from
 him, convinced me of my sister's folly.

I took the opportunity immediately
 to dismiss him; and seeing me resolved,
 he fell on his knees, intreating me not to
 expose a stranger in a foreign country;
 confessing the whole truth, that she was
 an unhappy woman, the Cardinal of B—
 's niece, who, governed by the
 dictates of her affection, had followed me
 in that disguise.

This she told me with a face unstained
 with a rosy blush, or the least appearance
 of that modest disorder so natural and
 becoming her sex: my confusion was
 much greater than her's; and yet one
 would not think me over bashful, nor
 extremely scrupulous, with regard to my
 character. Her impudence made me
 almost suspect the truth of what she had
 told me: but I was not in an inquisitive
 humour, and cared not what she was, if
 I had never been embarrassed with her; I
 had seen her face too often to find any
 charm of novelty in it; the passion she
 pretended for me was a mystery. When I
 remembered she had been without con-
 straint

strait a witness, as well as pimp, to many of my criminal amours.

However, as I was now without any anxiety for my sister, this artful woman, by her importunities, prevailed on my easy temper to let her stay in the family 'till she could find some other settlement. She staid; and in some moment of darkness seduced me to her ruin, and my own infamy: she was with child; I got lodgings for her, and, pretending some disgust, dismissed her as a *valet*; my mother and sister being intirely ignorant of the disguise of her sex.

In the mean time, my mother, who took the chagrin of my temper for a reformation of manners, was very solicitous with me to conclude a marriage she had proposed to a young woman of great merit, and a very agreeable person. I pursued the affair but coldly, and in mere complaisance to a most indulgent parent; 'till by frequent conversation with this charming woman, she engaged me by all the ties of reason and virtuous love: the modesty of her behaviour, joined to the most sincere and obliging temper in the world, secured her empire; her wit was sparkling and inoffensive; deceit and malice were strangers to her breast; a thousand nameless beauties appeared in all her conduct: 'till now I never knew the force of love, nor any of the refined sentiments that noble passion inspired. In what guiltless joys did the hours pass that I spent with my loved Cimene!

But what tongue can express the anguish I felt from my criminal affair with Palanty! I was forced to visit her, for fear she should divulge the secret, in revenge, and ruin me with the charming Cimene. You are a stranger, my Lord, to these vexations; your whole conduct has been governed by the rules of honour and reason: Oh may my worst enemy never know the curse of an engagement with a lewd, imperious woman! Fear kept me a slave to her caprice, and forced me to endure all the insolence, and rage of language, she had practised in her masculine habit among her inferiors; nor durst I offer to controul her expensive vanity, being willing to soften her, 'till she was past the dangerous state she was now in.

But no consideration could make me delay my intended marriage, let the event be what it would; the day was set that Heaven, in Cimene, gave me the greatest blessing of my life: the news

was soon spread, and reached Palanty's ears; who procured a deadly sleeping draught, and, unsuspected by those about her, desperately swallowed it, and slept her last; leaving a paper on her toilet, with an account who she was, and her adventure with me.

This accident was soon told to my mother; who was lost in sorrow, 'till I assured her, Palanty had imposed on my ignorance by her habit, until a few months before I dismissed her; and that, by her artifice, and not my own inclination, I had been ensnared into this misfortune: as much a rake as I had been, I could not but have a secret aversion to a woman of that dissolute character. But the infamy of this tragical event has justly fallen on me, since in all my other intrigues I had been the seducer, and too often triumphed in the spoils of unguarded innocence.

The lovely Cimene, to whom I had been but two days married, instead of betraying any female weakness, with peace in her looks, and persuasion in her tongue, endeavoured to compose the grief and distraction with which she found this infamous event had filled my thoughts. In her calm and unruffled temper I saw the privilege of a spotless life, and a mind unclouded with guilt, free from uneasy reflections on what was past, or restless expectations of what was to come.

This was just the reverse of my condition; the unhappy end of this miserable woman, the double murder of herself and unborn infant, the share I had in her misfortunes, has brought my former crimes in the blackest shape to my remembrance:

'Tis conscious guilt's the emphasis of hell,
We're all but fables, else, the priesthood tell.

Like furies, the ghosts of my past sins start up and terrify my restless imagination; my debauches, quarrels, licentious amours, pass in a confused succession before me: this is what secretly blasts my joys, when to the world they appear in their full bloom.

It is not a month since my softest wishes were crowned in the possession of the charming Cimene; I am yet surrounded with the congratulations of my friends on the happy occasion; every other circumstance of life seems to conspire to my satisfaction. You will ask me, my Lord, why I am not easy and

thankful in this circle of earthly enjoyments? What is the hindrance? Where is the obstacle?

It is guilt! it is conscious guilt! What was the matter with the first bold transgressor? Why did he run to the thickets to cover him? Why shelter himself among the trees of Eden? What could make him fly that gracious Presence, at which innocent nature smiled, the new creation bloomed afresh, and the morning stars rejoiced? Why is he fearful in the cool of the evening, who at the dawning of the same day knew no such passion? What has made this sudden alteration? Some mighty change must be within, for all without is the same. Is he not in Paradise, surrounded with all the pleasures of sense? The warbling music of the groves delights his ear: to charm his sight the gay creation unfolds its various beauties; the flowers breathe ambrosial fragrance to cheer him, the balmy air is yet untroubled by tempests, the sun shines in its original splendour, and Nature stands dressed in all her primæval perfection! The man is an exact temperament formed for immortality, and just warm from his great Creator's hands, from whom, with all amazement, now he flies, and seeks the covert of the woods for shelter.

This was all the effect of guilt, that secret wound that bleeds within! You will excuse my dwelling so long on this melancholy theme, when I tell you, it is some relief to that anguish which is a secret to all the world but your Lordship: I am well acquainted with your compassion and fidelity, and am going to make a farther trial of them, by a relation which will surprize you. I will not exact your belief, nor enter into the reason and philosophy of it; nor will I presume to contradict it, should you tell me I am distracted; that all I am going to discover, is the effect of frenzy: as it was but a momentary appearance, I will assert nothing; but as I was indulging my melancholy temper, in the retreat of a summer-house, sitting very late in a pensive posture, leaning on a table, a pale sulphureous gleam of light appeared, and seemed to hover round a form resembling Palantys; who, with a rueful aspect, dressed in the habiliments of the dead, stood before me, and with an air of unutterable anguish, laid this letter on the table by me, and immediately vanished. I should think this no more

than a dream, if the paper had not been real. The dreadful contents are as follow:

TO LYSANDER.

I Am convinced, by a terrible demonstration, of those truths I once denied: to my cost, I find, that Hell is no poetic fiction, no enthusiastic dream, nor pious fable of some mercenary priest: this was the language of my impiety, when I followed you in an impudent disguise; and, to support my masculine character, acted the Atheist, by ridiculing all that was sacred, till I was given up of Heaven to the strongest delusion, and the most daring infidelity.

Thus abandoned, I swallowed the deadly potion, with a full presumption of mingling with my native dust, and being insensible for ever: but the instant Death had closed my eyes, and laid his icy hand on my heart, a scene altogether new and surprizing opened before me; the just unembodied soul, in the height of astonishment, would fain have shrunk back again into its late warm habitation, from whence I had violently forced it; the attempt was vain; the avenues of mortal life were for ever shut, and I found myself the decision of those malignant spirits, who had been my seducers to this unnatural fact.

What execrations did I not utter against myself and them! I had indulged the rage, and practised the language of Hell in my mortal state; but here all was fruitless and unfeared; I was the captive of those infernal ministers, who waited to conduct me to the frontiers of eternal night: I cast my eyes to the heavenly luminaries, and the full blazing sun, whose light I was to lose for ever; I bid adieu to the fair creation, whose Almighty Former I had denied; I cast my eyes to the sparkling gates of bliss, and with infinite anguish found them shut against me; and hurried far through chaos, and primeval darkness, (far from the limits of celestial day) I reached my destined habitation; a dismal region, waste and wide, of which no mortal can form a conception, nor find a name for half its terrors.

Oh! fly the paths that lead to these mournful abodes. As I have been in my mortal state, the instrument of Hell to intice you to sin, your perdition would vastly aggravate my own misery; and I am suffered to warn you, as the rich libertine in the Gospel would have warned

his

his-brethren, that you come not to this place of torment.

I must no farther reveal the secrets of the deep, but am commanded back to the seats of impenetrable night, and endless despair!

PALANTY.

That this letter was left on the table, writ in a character exactly like Palanty's, is fact: whether the rest was real or imaginary, I dare not decide. *Your Lordship's, &c.*

LYSANDER.

LETTER XI.

LETTER THE SECOND, TO MY LORD —, FROM LYSANDER.

MY LORD,

YOU are entirely at your liberty to reject the relation I sent you: I never intended to make your belief in ghosts and apparitions a test of your Christianity; that stands on a more sure foundation, and has all the evidence of reason and miracles to support it: I am an instance of it's divine power, by which I am transformed from the brutal to the human nature: I can now glory in that privilege I lately despised, and, without vanity, claim the dignity of a reasonable creature.

My penitence was sincere, and found acceptance from Heaven: the sacred illumination scattered the gloom of guilt and despair, while in gentle whispers the Eternal Spirit breathed pardon, peace, and heavenly benedictions, to my soul; I felt the powerful influence, the flames of celestial love were kindled, my fears vanished like clouds before the morning sun.

'All hail,' I cried, 'ye unknown delights, ye unexperienced pleasures! Compared to you, what are my past enjoyments! What are all the amusements of sense! I never lived 'till now; I knew no more than the name, the shadow of happiness: but now I wake to life, and taste the joys of angels.'

I hope, my Lord, you will not think these the flights of imagination: you that have always believed the articles of religion, and kept it's bright rewards in view, can reflect on such subjects more calmly; but to me these glorious truths are all novelty and surprize: if a wretch from his infancy had been kept in a gloomy dungeon, and just delivered from that dark confinement, with what transports would he salute the great luminaries of heaven, while one that from his birth had been blessed with their beams would meet them without emotion!

These important subjects engage my whole attention; the creation wears new beauties; where-ever I cast my eyes, I meet impressions of the Divinity; I trace his footsteps among the silver rills, and invoke him in the silent grove: you know my poetic humour, by too many loose composures; but my muse is now consecrated, and in some sylvan retreat often assists my evening devotion.

Permit me, my Lord, to repeat my last invocation to the heavenly Power.

Descend, celestial Spirit, from above,
The uncreated source of light and love!
Perpetual calms, and sweet security,
Concord, and graceful order, wait on thee;
Decay, and Death, thy quick'ning rays exclude,
And springing nature smiles, by thee renew'd,
Darkness, and wild confusion, soon retire
Before thy clear, illuminating fire;
To gentle thoughts thou dost our bosoms move,
And breath'st the soft melodious soul of love.

O Thou! who mad'st the new creation bloom
With active life, and quick'ning virtue, come!
Come, like the silent fall of ev'ning dews,
Whose moisture all the flow'ry field renews;
Breathe on me, like the sweet Sabeian gale,
That fans with rosy wings the verdant dale;
Smooth as the gliding musick, that controuls
Each human care, and steals upon our souls;
In triumph, with the heav'nly train descend,
Of loves and graces, which on thee attend!

In silent shades, by some clear fountain's fall;
Thou oft hast answer'd to a mortal's call;
Oft in some artless cave, or humble cell,
Thou with the sons of men hast deign'd to dwell,
And left behind the high celestial seats,
To visit mortals in their low retreats.
When holy vows thy kind descent invite,
Thou hear'st the gentle whispers with delight;
While

While Nature tir'd, her midnight Sabbath
keeps,
And ev'ry thought, but pure devotion, sleeps:
The smiling stars roll on, the dazzling moon
In pomp advances to her silent noon;
While thy sweet voice, soft as the midnight
air,
Dispels the gloom of ev'ry earthly care,
Unfolding boundless prospects of delight,
Before the piercing, intellectual sight.

Beneath the sacred mount, by thee inspir'd,
The Hebrews glorious Leader sat retir'd;
The new-made world, and Eden's blooming
pride,
In various scenes before him lay descry'd.

O princely swain, how didst thou then de-
spise
Th' Egyptian court, how worthless in thy
eyes!
What were the grandeurs of a royal fate,
To the distinctions of thy present state?
While Paradise, in all its charming views,
For thee, the great creating voice renews;

For thee, again, the morning stars rejoice;
Again, for thee, they raise the tuneful voice;
The sons of God touch the melodious lyre,
And all the wide creation join the choir.

Lead me, propitious Spirit, lead me far,
Where I no more the voice of man may hear;
You charming visions, how you fire my soul,
And ev'ry thought of earthly things controul!
Through what enchanting paths, what flow'ry
ways,

My fancy led, with boundless freedom, strays!
Reveal'd the avenues of pleasure lie,
And open wide the crystal portals fly;
Immortal beauty smiles, angelick pow'rs,
In soft responses sing from rosy bow'rs.

You will not blame me, being got
here, if I have no inclination to descend:
but mortality will prevail; I sink to my
native element again; where, as long as
I am confined, believe me to be *your*
Lordship's most obliged humble servant,

LYSANDER.

L E T T E R XII.

THE SEQUEL OF THE STORY OF ROSELLA, IN THE LAST LETTER OF
THE FIRST PART OF LETTERS MORAL AND ENTERTAINING.

WHEN I was in the West, four
years since, I wrote you word,
that I had made an acquaintance in a fa-
mily, who lived in a little retirement at
the foot of a hill, a few miles from my
house. I then gave you an account of
the piety and beauty of those exemplary
recluses, and owned, that I had not at
that time forgot the charms of Melissa;
but I did not tell you, that they had made
an impression on me, which could never
be erased by all the modish schemes of
interest and alliances; nor could that dar-
ling, but mistaken, notion of liberty hold
me out against the desire I had to call her
mine, and make her so by the strongest
and happiest ties, those of marriage. I
struggled with my own heart, and would
fain have terrified it, by the laugh I
should raise among my acquaintance,
when they heard that I, in the gayest
bloom of life, and with four thousand
pounds a year at my command, should
leave all the fashionable maxims of man-
kind, and fall in love with a young wo-
man, who had only beauty, and the sanc-
tity of her manners, to recommend her:
for though her birth is noble, she has on-
ly three thousand pounds, which I design

to present to Honoria her mother, the day
after our marriage, which will be solemn-
ized as soon as my lawyer can finish a
deed, by which I give Melissa a thou-
sand pounds a year rent-charge for her
life, in case she should survive me.

Now I have told you my happiness,
I cannot help making you acquainted
with Rosella's, whose story, you often
said, touched you. I went to the house
of Honoria, the day after I came hither,
for now it was my only business. As soon
as I alighted, a clean footman, in a
frock turned up with green, took my
horse: I expected from this to find an
alteration in the family, for when I was
there first they had no livery-servant.
As soon as I came into the hall, I saw a
beautiful young man, whose dress was
entirely plain; his hair hung in natural
curls without any powder, and his air
and appearance seemed to suit with the
simplicity and elegance of the other in-
habitants of that happy dwelling. Ro-
sella was sitting by a table, and had a boy
of about fourteen months old in her lap,
rosy and smiling as a Cherubim, who
was playing with some flowers with
which Melissa was going to dress a basin.

Rosella

Rosella immediately rose, and coming towards me, desired I would give her leave to present her husband Alonzo to me. I was rejoiced at the sound, and congratulated her upon the change of her fortune, in a manner that might convince her how sincerely I shared in all that related to her. The lovely Melissa seemed glad to see me, and ran to call Honoria with an obliging haste. After a few compliments were over, I enquired what had produced the alteration I saw. Honoria told me, that about two years and a half ago, Alonzo's father fell dangerously ill, and that he expressed an ardent desire to see his son; upon which his wife wrote to a nephew she had in London, who was the most intimate friend Alonzo had upon earth, in hopes that he might possibly be acquainted with the place of his retreat; and begged of him, if he knew how to direct a letter, that he would write, and desire him to come and see his dying father. The nephew immediately dispatched an express to Alonzo, who was retired into a little village in Lancashire, where he boarded in the house of an old clergyman, who had no other family than himself and his wife, and who were glad to have Alonzo with them, as he appeared a modest, sober young man; for their circumstances were too plentiful to want the advantage of a boarder. He immediately left the old people, and came home about four days before the death of his father, who was transported at the sight of him; nor did he feel less joy, when his mother assured him, that Montanor (for that was his father's name) had, for many months before his illness, lived a very penitent, regular life.

'As soon as I heard of Alonzo's return, I wrote him a letter, in which I desired to see him as soon as Montanor's funeral was over, but forbid him to come till that time; he complied with me in that request, as he has ever since done, in all that I desired of him. About six weeks after Rosella and he were married, I begged him to let me enjoy the company of my daughter while I lived in this solitary habitation; for I could not think of leaving it; and we have passed our time in the most perfect harmony. I cannot deny him

'the justice of acknowledging to his face, that we are not only happier in our retirement than we were before, by the addition of a chearful companion, but edified and improved by the piety of his life.' Alonzo seemed out of countenance at this part of her discourse; and the modesty with which he received it, shewed how much he deserved the praise she gave him. She continued to tell me, that about four months after he married Rosella, he received a letter from the lawyer in the village where he had boarded, to let him know, that a few weeks ago the clergyman, with whom he had lived, had buried his wife, and about a fortnight after fell ill himself of the same fever, and died; that he had by his will left Alonzo his estate, which was about an hundred and eighty pounds a year; and two thousand pounds in money; which, added to about two hundred and fifty pounds a year, and some money which his father left him, makes their fortune very easy.

Here Honoria ended her discourse; and it was so late, that they desired me to stay dinner; after which I asked to speak with her alone, and told her, I begged I might have leave to propose myself to Melissa, if her heart was not already engaged. Honoria assured me it was not, and seemed surprized at a proposal so much to Melissa's advantage; but told me, she begged I would endeavour to get Melissa's consent without her interposing her authority; since she could not resolve, even in so advantageous a thing, to force her inclination. When I named it to the young beauty, she did not at first seem averse to any thing, but the leaving of her mother, which the smallness of her house would oblige her to: but after a few days, the nearness of my house reconciled her to that scruple; and I had the joy to find, that inclination had a greater share than interest in her compliance. Rejoice with me, Lyfander; my happiness in your alliance will not end at my death; the conversation I shall now enjoy will fit me for eternal rewards. I will make no apology to you for the fallies of my pleasure, which will let me talk to you of nothing but my own affairs. *Adieu.*

L E T T E R XIII.

TO SERENA.

MY DEAR SERENA,

AS I have always made you the confident of whatever has related to me, I cannot help giving you an account of the pleasure and pain occasioned by an acquaintance I have made with a young woman since I came hither: she was only daughter to a man who had been formerly an officer in the English army; but quitted it in discontent, and came hither with Semanthe his daughter, to treat with some people about a project of working in some mines, which are believed to have many large veins of silver in them.

Semanthe came to see me upon my arrival; I found so much wit and good-nature in her conversation, that we contracted a great intimacy, and were continually together: she had every qualification that could make her company entertaining; she sung, played on the harpsichord, painted in water-colours, and had a surprizing genius for poetry; her sentiments on all subjects seemed just and noble: I thought myself the happiest person in the world, in finding a companion so instructive and agreeable.

She told me the story of her past life; which, described in her charming language, still raised my esteem; in every occurrence I had the pleasure to find she practised the highest rules of justice and benevolence; and though now in the early part of her life, she was guided by the nicest rules of virtue: by a passion she had for a person by whom she was equally beloved, I was confirmed of the prudence of her conduct; I found that no partiality or tenderness could tempt her to deviate from the severest principles of modesty and honour.

I was not at rest till I had poured out all the secrets of my heart to her, which I did without the least reserve; and trust-

ed her with a secret of the greatest importance to my future tranquillity—But what is human dependence?—I found the inmost secrets of my soul betrayed by the person in whom I had so entirely confided—I knew not how to behave myself in this perplexity—I had too much compassion for my fallen friend to give her the pain and confusion of hearing my reproaches; and too much sincerity, to continue my intimacy with her: but for my own security, I was forced to break off all further commerce with one, of whose guilt I had the utmost certainty.

This is a very sensible affliction to me in a place where I have so few acquaintance; and am not in a temper to contract any new friendship. I could as soon have questioned my own existence, as Semanthe's truth; and now, though I cannot acquit her, I am perpetually endeavouring to mitigate her crime: I tell my heart, her error did not proceed from any malignity in her nature, but a too great confidence in some other friend; that she, as well as I, has been deceived, and only told my secrets where she thought she might safely have trusted her own: I am ready to melt into tears whenever I think of her, and find more compassion than anger, on reflecting on her conduct; though I no longer converse with her, it is more to make her sensible of her guilt, in betraying a trust of importance, than to shew my own resentment. I shall be for ever interested in her welfare; and if my prayers have any force, she will live to wear off every failing, that can cast a blemish on a mind capable of arriving at as great a degree of perfection as human nature is capable of.

I have wrote myself into too melancholy a humour, to say any more, but that I am *yours*,

ISABELLA,

L E T T E R XIV.

FROM MELINDA, GIVING AN ACCOUNT OF HER CONCEALMENT.

MY DEAR ORIANA,

I Told you before I left my brother's house, that you should hear from me as soon as I was settled; and that I would inform you of the reason of my flight: you have too much candour and charity to judge harshly of my proceedings; which, could you see my heart, you would rather pity than condemn me for.

You have often, within these last two years, observed an alteration in my temper and person: I am no more the sprightly florid creature, that you used to call the emblem of health and cheerfulness; you saw the change, but did not guess the cause was a secret, hopeless passion. I was at a play: I saw there one of the most agreeable persons in the world: his dress, his behaviour, every thing was graceful and easy. The tragedy of Cato was acted; he was attentive, and seemed to enter into every sentiment, where either the hero or lover was described: his aspect wore the visible characters of fortitude and virtue; he stood up between the acts, and turned towards the box where I sat; and when I went out, he made way for me through the crowd: but I never after saw him in any publick place, nor knew who nor what he was; but the charming youth had made an impression on my thoughts, which had soon a very happy effect: I grew weary of the noisy tumultuous way of living in my brother's house, and refused sharing in the constant round of diversions that my sister loved; nor could there be any thing more dissolute and extravagant, than the manners of this family: assemblies, balls, gaming—all sorts of riots and licentiousness: I never indeed approved these entertainments, and was always uneasy, without knowing how to make myself otherwise.

The paths to happiness, that religion proposed, I was as ignorant of, as the savage Americans, in their native groves. Dumain, who married my sister, was a professed libertine: my parents left me very young to their care, my sister being many years older than I am; and if my godfathers and godmothers, instead of renouncing the pomps and vanities of

the world for me in my baptism, had solemnly vowed I should be bred in the midst of those snares, and seducing temptations, they could not more effectually have discharged their trust, than by placing me in this family, whose Sunday's amusement was cards; for we never went to church, unless in a frolick to spend an idle hour, in whispering or laughing.

However, my guardian angel did not quit his charge, but by the impression of a virtuous love, fortified my soul against every loose inclination; I fled diversions, grew fond of retirement; this soon gave me a habit of thinking: and if I had schemes of happiness, they were all in some future life beyond the grave; but my notions were clouded and imperfect: indeed I believed there was a God, and the reproaches of my own reason taught me to fear him; but I had never looked in the Bible since I learned to read; and was as ignorant of Christianity, as a young Hottentot bred in a cave. My pensive temper now detested vanity, in every appearance; plays and novels no more diverted me: but wanting something to read, I saw a Bible in the room, where my sister's woman lay; and opening it, my attention was immediately engaged. The history was new to me: I carried it to my chamber; but how was I surprized, to find the life and precepts of the great Founder of the Christian Faith so different from the manners and principles of those who assumed that sacred profession! I found myself in the flowery paths of ruin, nor knew how to extricate myself from the fatal snare: this was the secret language of my soul, to that invisible Power which knew it's sincerity.

Thou Ruler of the sky, almighty Name,
Whose piercing eye discerns my rising
thoughts,
Ere they are form'd within my anxious breast,
Thou seest my soul struggling to break the
bands,
Which thus detain her captive to the earth;
Thou seest how vainly she would soar on high,
Passion and pleasure clog her downy wing,
Prevent her flight, and sink her to the dust:
O There

There low she lies, and trembling begs thy aid,
Conscious how impotent she is without Thee.

My sister soon perceived the alteration of my temper, and used her art to engage me in some criminal diversion; but in vain; I was sick and tired of these extravagancies. But what could I do? my fortune was lost in the South-Sea; I was dependent on Dumain's and my sister's charity; and to heighten my distress, I was importuned by my Lord — (who was lately married) to yield to his criminal passion. At this proposal I started with horror, but could not shun his address without quitting this disorderly family; which I resolved to do, and cast myself on the protection of Heaven.

I left my brother's house just after dinner, and went in a hackney-coach to a woman in the city that had been my nurse: I engaged her to secrecy, and got her to enquire for a place in some merchant's family; she soon succeeded, and introduced me to the wife of an East India merchant, who lived in great splendour. My business was to wait on her in the station of a chamber-maid: she was very handsome, modest, and unaffected; the orders of the family were so regular and peaceful, so perfectly the reverse of my brother's, that I thought myself in another world, and among a new set of beings: temperance and sobriety reigned amidst the height of plenty and liberality. The rooms were noble, and furnished with all the riches of the Indian world, and looked like the palace of some eastern monarch.

I found myself perfectly at ease; dressing my mistress was all I had to do; which was a very agreeable employment, and soon dispatched: she had something so genteel in her manner, that every thing looked graceful and becoming her, and cost but little trouble to make it sit well. Her conversation was innocent and instructive; her hours spent in reading, or some little amusement with her needle, without the least inclination to rambling after balls or masquerades.

I spent two or three weeks in this regular manner, my mistress treating me almost on a level. I had not yet seen my master, who now returned from his country house; but, my dear Oriana, think what was my affliction, when I discovered that he was the same lovely youth I had seen at the play. As soon as he

saw me, he turned as red as crimson, and I as pale as ashes: he passed by me, and went immediately into my mistress's room. It was almost two years since I had seen him, and I had some hopes I was forgot; however, I resolved to quit the family, if I found he knew me, or that my friendship for his wife did not extinguish my passion. On my master's part, I soon found reason to be easy: I hardly ever saw him; he was either at the Exchange, or, when at home, engaged in a series of beneficent actions. His wealth was immense, which he dispersed with an unequalled generosity: he assisted honest traders that had but a small stock, paid the debts of prisoners, relieved the widow, and redressed the injured and oppressed: this was every day's business, which yet never intrenched on his hours of devotion, in private or publick.

I now grew easy; a man of this character was not like to indulge a guilty flame in his own breast, or to flatter it in mine; besides, his absence would soon relieve me; for he intended to go to the Indies with the fleet, which was to set sail within a month.

The time was now expired; the day before he went his voyage, after he had been an hour with my mistress, in some private conversation, he left her, and came directly into my room, with such an air of benignity in his face, as some heavenly minister would wear, who brought a message of peace.

He begun: 'You will be surprized, Madam, to find I know your family, and the reason you have put yourself into the protection of mine. The first sight I had of you at the play, made an impression, which was never effaced, till I gave my vows to the best of wives; it is with some confusion I own the wrong I did your virtue, when I tell you nothing should have prevented my pursuit of the passion you first raised, but the scandal of the house you was in; which was so extravagant, that it forbade me ever thinking of you; but I now do you entire justice, and admire that triumph of honour, that put you in a station so low, to secure yourself from the temptation of returning to your brother: I have left you ten thousand pounds in bank-bills, and have told your case (as I had it from the woman that nursed you) to my wife, who has all the virtues that ever adorned the sex: she yielded to this
' proposal

'proposal with transport; and waits while I am gone to deliver the bills.' He said this, and left me without time or language to speak my gratitude.

My mistress immediately came into the chamber, with goodness shining in her eyes, and gave me the bank-bills, with a grace which only virtue can stamp on human actions. She prevented my thanks, by making an apology for her ignorance of my quality, assuring me, the house was entirely at my command: and that the hopes of my staying with her, was the greatest satisfaction she proposed in her dear Henry's absence. I could not possibly discover my sense of this surprizing benefit, by all the force of language. My silence, and the tenderness into which she saw my soul was melted, was the only evidence of gratitude I could now give.

In the morning when every thing was ready for the parting of the East India fleet, my generous benefactor came into his wife's chamber, to take his last adieu. I was with her, endeavouring to give that consolation myself wanted: her grief drew some reluctant tears from him, while he endeavoured to conceal the inward anguish: the hero and the lover appeared in his behaviour. And when to excuse the intemperance of her sorrow, his wife urged the dan-

gers of the seas, and the rage of barbarous nations on the shore; I shall never forget with what an air of greatness he replied—'*Je crains Dieu, et je n'ai point d'autre crainte*—I fear God, and I have no other fear.' Thus undaunted would the godlike man have appeared, had he seen the stars falling from their orbs, and heard the sound of the last thunders. When he had, with an apparent regret, freed himself from the embraces of his wife, with a look of compassion, like that of some pitying angel, he bid me farewell. His domesticks were lost in grief; the passage from his house was crowded with his grateful dependents, whose wrongs or necessities had been redressed by him: a thousand ardent prayers for his prosperity reached the skies, and gained the divine assent; while he hastened through the admiring throng, distressed with the popular applause.

How poor a figure is that of a libertine, in his most glittering heights of vanity, compared to this great man, who has so early begun his race of glory, and is in the very bloom of youth mature in every virtue! Instead of passing his hours in a train of idle amusements, the gay part of his life is devoted to heaven, and the publick welfare.—You know where to find *your humble servant*,

MELINDA.

LETTER XV.

TO EUSEBIUS.

AS my reformation is partly owing to that exalted notion of virtue your example gave me, it is one of the greatest satisfactions I have, to express the sense of that immense obligation, by unfolding the most secret recesses of my soul to you.

I cannot but communicate my content, while every view my thoughts take, heightens my happiness: I look back on the stormy ocean, the tumult and perplexity of my life past, and bless the gracious Power that saved me on the very edge of perdition; when I look forward, my expectations are all bright and unbounded.

I bid my soul take it's ease, banish every care, and act without restraint, the glorious prodigal. I survey my vast possession, lose my wishes in endless

plenty, and give up all my powers to indolence and joy. I look to the stars, count the heavenly glories, and call the treasures of eternity my own.

Let chaos come again; be the gay creation lost in darkness, and the fair face of nature become an universal blank. Let her beauties fade, and those divine characters she wears be effaced; I shall yet be happy, when the groves shall no more renew their verdure; nor the valleys boast their flowery pride—when the sun is extinguished in the skies, and all the æthereal lamps have burnt out their golden flames—when the commissioned angel shall lift his hand on high, and swear by the unutterable name—That time shall be no more—when these transitory images of things for ever take their flight; I shall explore the worlds of

life and pleasure, and triumph in the plenitude of bliss.

Then shall the celestial *arcana* be unveiled, and the Heaven of Heavens disclose their glories; the ineffable Divinity shall shew the milder beauties of his face, and manifest as much of his excellence, as created intellects can support. But what angel's wing has measured the height of his throne? Who has entered those sacred recesses, where he dwells in himself, possessed of unbounded bliss? Has the ocean of joy been fathomed, or the limits of independent felicity described? Who has found access to the inmost habitations of the Most High, and gazed on essential glory, before whose fainter emanations the angelic splendours are eclipsed, the thrones and principalities of light disappear?

What path is found to those sublime retreats, Where pleasure banquets in it's regal seats, Where Beauty triumphs in her native bow'r, Uncopy'd yet by the creating pow'r? Ten thousand various forms, divinely fair, Sparkle in their supreme ideas there; While wisdom, with superior order, shines In boundless schemes, and infinite designs: Wondrous the prospect, clear, and unconfin'd, But open only to th'Eternal Wind.

What tow'ring intellect, with daring flight, Has made excursion thro' these realms of light; The blest recesses, where th'approachless God, From all duration, made his high abode?

Whoe'er has mark'd with bold enquiry eyes, From whence the secret springs of life arise? How from their deep exhaustless source they flow, To actuate heav'n, and cheer the world below?

Those dazzling habitations who has found, Where Love, in all his heav'nly charms, sits crown'd?

Great Love, th' Almighty Father's first delight:

His image, and the darling of his sight? The full resemblance of the Deity, Who all his glorious image stamp'd on thee; 'Twas thou, who didst his boundless thoughts employ,

His sole complacence, his peculiar joy. From ages unbegun:—But who can tell Thy generation, and thy birth reveal? What thought can measure back the long extent

Of nameless times, and speak thy great descent?

Before the hills appear'd, or fountains flow'd,

Or golden flames in the blue æther glow'd; Before the vast creation had a name, Thou wast in bliss and dignity the same: By Thee the sun, by Thee the stars, were made; The spacious skies, at thy command, were spread:

The heav'n of heav'ns, the empyrean coast, Were form'd by Thee, with all their num'rous hosts;

Angels, archangels, thrones, dominions, pow'rs,

Who sing thy conquests in th'immortal bow'rs. For Thou dost ev'ry heav'nly breast inflame, And loud Victorias answer to thy name.

Their beings and their bliss they own to Thee, Thou equal offspring of the Deity!

His perfect image Thou dost justly prove; For all the bright Divinity is Love.

You find, in whatever character I act, whether the faint or the libertine, *Love* is the animating motive, the leading principle. But how superior are my prospects! how glorious the hopes that now fire my soul, to the trifling ends I had lately in view! My desires terminate in nothing below infinite excellence, and unbounded felicity. *Adieu.*

LETTER XVI.

THE STORY OF OLINDA AND SOPHRONIA.

[TRANSLATED FROM TASSO'S JERUSALEM, BOOK II.]

THE King was now with martial cares oppress'd,

When curs'd Ismenes thus his lord address'd:

'To share your fate, great Sir, I left my cell,

'And bring you all th' assisting force of hell:

'Th' infernal spirits, subject to my will,

'With eager speed my strict commands fulfill!

'By them inform'd, this method I propose,

'To guard the fortress, and insult your foes:

'Beneath a temple which the Christians own,

'Descends a vault to all, but them, unknown:

'Within the awful consecrated ground

'An image of the Virgin Mother's found;

'Perpetual

' Perpetual lamps before the wond'rous maid
' Are lighted up, and fragrant incense laid:
' This statue, Sir, by your own hands convey'd
' From thence, must be in Macon's temple laid;
' Secur'd by spells, while that does safe remain,
' Godfrey shall storm the fated town in vain.'

This said, th' impatient king directs his
pace,

With impious fury, to the holy place;
Nor to profane the sacred pavement fears,
But madly thence the beauteous Image bears:
Then in his god's polluted seat 'twas laid,
While o'er it ev'ry charm the Wizard said.

But when in heav'n the next gay morning
shone,

It's guardian finds the sacred Treasurer gone;
Searches in vain; then with a thousand fears,
Distracted, to the court the tidings bears.

The prince his Christian subjects first su-
pects,

And all his flaming rage at them directs:
But whether human hands the work had done,
Or pow'r divine, to men was yet unknown;
The curst enchanter mutters o'er his spells,
Yet nothing by the hellish art reveals;
Each house was ransack'd to it's last retreat,
But no success th' enrag'd enquirers meet.

' 'Tis then resolv'd, the raving Monarch cries,

' I'll doom them all one gen'ral sacrifice;

' The guiltless with th' unknown offender
' falls;

' A fact like this for speedy vengeance calls.'

This cruel sentence reach'd the Christians
ears:

Their sudden fate unusual horror wears;
No dawning hope of safety was in sight,
No method of defence, or secret flight:
Nor dare they mercy from the tyrant crave;
Their last and desp'rate refuge was the grave:
But Heav'n, which ne'er abandons the dis-
tress'd,

Provides them succour, where they hop'd it
least.

A beauteous Virgin liv'd, but liv'd un-
known,

Amidst the concourse of the noisy town;
A lively bloom adorn'd her charming face,
An artless softness, and persuasive grace:
To this advantage fav'ring Heav'n had join'd
The richer blessing of a noble mind.

With pious thoughts, and sacred zeal, in-
spir'd,

From all the world she would have liv'd retir'd;
But envious Love the chaste design forbid,
Nor suffer'd so much merit to be hid.

A youthful vot'ry to her guiltless eyes,
His fatal pow'r had doom'd a sacrifice:
One creed, one holy faith they both confess'd,
In one pure form were both their pray'rs ad-
dress'd;

The youth as modest, as his mistress fair,
With awful silence still conceal'd his care;
And still the lovely author of his pains,
A stranger to his am'rous grief remains;

His cares and services were all unpaid,
Nor once regarded by the wary maid.

The Christians danger now had reach'd
her ears,

And fill'd her with a thousand growing fears:
At last, some gen'rous stratagem she sought,
How, by her own, their safety might be bought:
But shame, and female fear, th' attempt re-
strain,

And render all her great intentions vain;
'Till bolder hope her first design renews,
Which bravely now the stedfast maid pursues.

She pass'd the crowded streets with sober
pace,

Nor strove to veil, nor yet expose her face;
Downward her eyes with modest looks incline,
And with a nice engaging coyness shine;
Her charming air, her easy mien, and dress,
Nor art, nor perfect negligence, confess:
Admir'd of all the thoughtful beauty pass'd,
And met the wild disorder'd King at last:

' Great Sir,' she then began, ' the Christians
' spare,

' And I th' unknown offender will declare.'

A decent boldness lighten'd in her eyes,
Whose piercing lustre ev'ry heart surprize:
The vanquish'd Monarch stood confus'd and
charm'd,

His visage alter'd, and his rage disarm'd:
Ev'n love had enter'd: but th' imperious fair
Attack'd his soul by methods too severe:
Not frowns, nor coy forbidding beauty move,
But gentle smiles indulge the flame of love:
Yet, if not love, amazement and delight,
Her charms within his doubtful breast excite:
He paus'd, and thus—' Let me the secret share,
' The people's lives, at thy request, I'll spare.'

' From first to last,' she cries, ' the bold
' design,

' The great attempt and daring action's mine.'
And thus, by an heroical deceit,
Her life abandon'd for the publick fate.

Again enquir'd the yet suspending King,
' Who was thy curs'd adviser in the thing?'
Th' undaunted maid replies—' The whole
' design,

' Contriv'd, resolv'd, and executed, 's mine,
' The danger, the fatigue, was mine alone;
' The guilt and glory shall be all my own.'

Enrag'd, the tyrant then replies—' And all
' My vengeance on thy wretched head shall fall.'

' 'Tis just,' she calmly said, ' and I'm con-
' tent;

' Th' illustrious action mine, mine be the
' punishment:

' But, Sir, your anxious searches are in
' vain

' The violated Image to regain;
' For nothing but it's ashes now remain;
' This way secur'd, that by no Pagan hand
' The holy shrine might be again profan'd:
' Demand no more, my Lord; enough is
' known;

' The action I both justify and own.'

Her

Her daring language, and relentless air,
 No more the wild outrageous King could bear;
 No more his swelling fury could restrain;
 Her youth, her pow'rful beauty, plead in vain;
 Nor interceding love his rigour tames;
 The pity'd Virgin sentenc'd to the flames,
 Whom thence (yet with compassion and re-
 morse)

The murmur'ing Pagans in a tumult force:
 Her hands are bound, her modest face un-
 veil'd,

No more it's charms from vulgar eyes con-
 ceal'd,

Tho' void of fear, her doubtful looks confess
 A soft concern, and human tenderness:

The rosy blush, that from her visage flies,
 Not paleness, but a snowy white supplies.

Meantime the wond'rous accident was
 known

From street to street, thro' all the swarming
 town:

The person doubtful, the relation true,
 Among the rest, Olinda thither drew:

Too soon the wretched youth approach'd,
 and found,

By impious hands, his charming mistress
 bound:

Distracted now among the guards he press'd,
 And thus aloud th' astonish'd King address'd:

'Ah! royal Sir, yourself no more deceive,
 Nor this fond maid's invented tale believe:

'Could she, alas! the cautious watch betray,

'And from it's seat the weighty shrine convey?

'Tis fiction all;—the enterprize was mine,

'Nor will I thus a glorious fate resign.'

He adds, 'Your temple, down a sloping way,

'Receives the light, and draws the beamy

'day;

'Thro' that I stole the sacred prize away:

'My Lord, the sentenc'd criminal you see;

'These chains, this cruel death belongs to me.'

'And could not then a single life suf-

'fice,

'Unhappy youth!' the fair Sophronia cries,

'With kindling love and pity in her eyes;

'What rage, what fury mov'd thee to expose

'Thyself a victim to relentless foes?

'What tears, what mean reluctance, have I

'shown,

'That you believe I cannot die alone?'
 But nothing could her kind repulses gain;

Unshaken, still, his first designs remain:

With steadfast courage each despises life,

And long between them held the gen'rous

strife;

Virtue, and mighty love, dispute the field,

And neither in the friendly contest yield.

The tyrant raves, nor longer now refrains,

But both one cruel punishment ordains:

Commission'd, soon the charming youth they

bind

With heavy chains, and to the stake confin'd.

'Are these,' he cries, 'the fetters love pre-

'pares?

'This the reward of all my tender cares?

'With softer thoughts I fed my fond desires,

'And hop'd to meet thee in more gentle fires:

'Yet could I, falling in thy tender arms,

'Expire, my death had still a thousand charms;

'Could I receive thy parting sighs, and join,

'At the last fatal gasp, my lips with thine;

'Our souls united, then to heav'n should fly,

'And I content, my charming fair should die.'

'Far other cares,' she mildly said, 'than these,

'Olinda, should our serious minds possess:

'Lament thy sins, contemplate the reward

'For faith, and humble penitence, prepar'd:

'The palm, the starry crown, and martyr's

'due,

'With all the boundless raptures that ensue:

'Survey the sun, survey the dazzling sky;

'To those blest regions we must shortly fly.'

Of gods and men the Pagans murmur'd

loud,

The Christians, silent, weep among the crowd.

The King, nor could his pity be disguis'd,

A strange unusual tenderness surpris'd;

He durst no more the moving object view;

But fix'd, and scorning to relent, withdrew:

Sophronia, unconcern'd, alone appears,

Nor in the universal sorrow shares.

The mournful officers had plac'd the while,

And now were lighting up the smoaky pile;

When a young champion, with a martial grace,

And lofty mien, approach'd the fatal place;

A tigress on her plumy helmet shone,

Which for the fair Clarinda, made her known:

Her sex's nicer ornaments she shed,

In toilsome arms, to great achievements bred:

Her hands the labour of the loom refuse,

Nor in a closet could her mind amuse;

But o'er the fields, in savage spoils array'd,

Or thro' the woods, with fearless thoughts,

she stray'd:

When yet a child, the fiery steed she rein'd,

Challeng'd the race, or wrestled on the sand;

Vast deserts, hills, and pathless wilds she

trac'd,

When with her spear the foaming boar she

chas'd.

From Persia now the blooming warrior came,

To win new trophies of immortal fame;

In battles past her sword had oft compell'd

The scatter'd Gauls to quit the bloody field:

Majestick charms, which ev'ry heart surprize,

And awful glories, sparkle in her eyes.

Arriving here, prepar'd for death, she found

The tender youth and lovely virgin bound:

The feeble sex to heav'n her eyes address'd,

And in her looks a silent calm express'd;

The other grieves, and melts in pitying tears,

Not for his own unhappy fate, but her's.

The warlike nymph for both compassion

proves,

But most her care the silent sufferer moves:

She to the people turns, nor loses time,

Demands with haste, and hears in brief their

crime:

Intreats the execution they'd delay,

And helps herself the rising flames to stay;

Then

Then charg'd—' Let none this office under-
' take,

' 'Till from the King I send them orders back.'

Her bold commands the willing crowd obey:

She, to the court directed, speeds away,

And audience gain'd, begins—' Great prince,
' from far

' Th' unknown Clarinda comes, with you
' to share

' The toils and hazards of the hostile field,

' A volunteer to your commands I yield,

' Whether to meet the battle on the plain,

' Or at the walls the breaches to maintain.'

The King replies—' Who has not heard
' thy fame?

' What distant climes are strangers to thy
' name?

' Thy deeds, illustrious virgin, spread thy
' praise,

' Where-e'er the wand'ring sun reveals his
' rays:

' Assisted thus, we Godfrey's arms defy,

' By thee secur'd of certain victory;

' To thy command our forces we resign,

' The war and all it's glorious conduct's
' thine.'

Her modest thanks the graceful maid ex-
press'd,

And thus, again, her gen'rous suit address'd:

' Unusual 'tis, I know, my Lord, and
' hard,

' For service unperform'd, to ask reward;

' But by your royal clemency, assur'd,

' I boldly beg, of quick success secur'd:

' Reverse, great Sir, the sentenc'd lovers
' doom;

' An act like this, your bounty will become.'

' Nothing was e'er the vanquish'd King re-
plied,

' To such a fair petitioner deny'd;

' Their lives, heroick maid, your purchase be,

' Guilty, or innocent, I set them free.'

LETTER XVII.

FROM BELLAMOUR, RELATING THE SEQUEL OF HIS PASSION FOR ALMEDA,
IN THE EIGHTH LETTER OF THE FIRST PART OF LETTERS MORAL AND
ENTERTAINING.

MY DEAR CARLOS,

I Am pleased to find, that neither the
gaiety of your humour, nor your
own successful amours, have made you
insensible to the misfortunes of your
friend: your compassion is some relief,
for I am really past jesting; and raillery,
in this case, would have been inhuman.

You may remember, in my last letter,
I had some hopes the discovery of my
inclinations for Almeda would prevail
with Elvira to free me from the engage-
ment I made to my father to marry her;
but I was disappointed; all the art and
eloquence I employed, to paint the height
of my passion for her rival, had just the
contrary effect: instead of raising her
anger and resentment, it melted her into
a tenderness, of which I never thought
her capable. At last she told me, though
she would not suffer her tongue so far to
belye the sentiments of her heart, as to
refuse me; yet I might refuse to marry
her, if I knew how to dispense with my
obligations to a dying father.

The naming my father gave a pious
emotion to my soul, and awakened all
the filial gratitude and veneration due to
his memory: I am no libertine; virtue
and vice are with me real distinctions; I
dare not violate my word to the meanest

of my dependents, nor even to my worst
enemy: honour and conscience have hi-
therto governed my secret actions; I felt
the force of Elvira's words, and left her
without making any reply.

But how am I embarrassed! If I had
never seen the charming Almeda, I must
have been unhappy; Elvira has been,
from her infancy, bred up with my sisters;
my affection for her has been always the
same as for them, and seems the tie of
nature, not of choice: in all the little
freedoms of conversation, I have treated
her with the same decency, as if she stood
in that relation: destiny seemed to have
set some sacred bounds between us, that
it would have been criminal to violate;
this sentiment is so habitual to my
thoughts, that I could as soon commit
incest, and break in on all the sanctity
of nature's laws, as fall in love with
Elvira. She is handsome enough, so
are my sisters; I love her, as I do them,
with a very pure and innocent affection;
her charms have never kindled one soft
desire in my breast; rather a religious
horror would seize me in addressing her:
she is as secure from my attempts, as if
an angel stood visibly before me to guard
her virtue.

In this situation, imagine, if you can,
how

how miserable I must be with this legacy of a wife: she brings a vast fortune, you will tell me; but, my dear Carlos, could she bring me both the Indies, it could be no relief to my domestic chagrin: I am no rake; nor could you propose any fashionable liberty, but what would heighten my uneasiness; yet I dare not reflect on my father; it was not avarice that governed him, but rather compassion for a young orphan committed to his care; however I suffer, be his memory unblemished, and the sacred remains undisturbed by my complaints.

But the crisis of my misery is yet untold; Almeda is fixed to her cruel resolution of seeing me no more: to what cave, what desert, what unfrequented place she is retired, I cannot find; but she is certainly eloped from mortal men, and escapes all my enquiries: however, she has favoured me with the inclosed letter since her retreat; which I have sent, to justify the height of my passion; by which you'll see the beauty of her mind is equal to that of her charming person. I am, Sir, *yours*, &c.

BELLAMOUR.

TO BELLAMOUR.

I Had not the least intention ever to write to you more, or put you in mind there was such a person in the world as Almeda, had not your distresses reached me; and your endeavours to find me out, obliged me to assure you, the search is in vain: I am determined never to see you more; and this shall be the last letter you will ever receive from me; which I write purely for your consolation, if an account of my quiet will be any to you.

From the moment you told me my happiness depended on Elvira's refusing you, I dismissed every flattering hope: I was sensible she knew too well how to distinguish merit; and how rarely such excellence as your's is to be met with: to resign you to the possession of another, to conquer the warmest wishes, and find happiness in giving pleasure to those we love, abstracted from ourselves, is a refinement few people are capable of, and what I did not expect from Elvira: she is conscious of her own superior charms, and may reasonably hope to

gain your heart; whilst her esteem for you would not suffer her to let you dispose of your's to a person, who, in the common views of mankind, is unworthy of you.

Oh! why did fate throw you in my way? Was it only to awaken me from my stupid negligence of the world, to a sense of sorrow? to shew me a glimpse of happiness, only to make me more sensible of my indigence? Had your part in life been to act the dependent, and mine the advanced station, you had been left to me in quiet, nobody would have disputed my right: and I should have found more, much more pleasure in rewarding such merit, than I should have done now in sharing your fortune. But why do I expostulate with Heaven, who, no doubt, allotted me into this sphere of life, as most suitable for me? It is in our own power to make the incidents of human life good or evil: it is our own minds that constitute them either; the reception they meet with there, and the turn they take, gives them their proper tincture. Let us not disturb the wise œconomy, but submit to the methods of Providence. You have obeyed your father in the disposal of your person to Elvira; let her have your mind also, it is her right; I will confess it is. There only I could envy her happiness; and it is there her delicacy could never endure a rival. Let us not be just by halves: may the same generous spirit, that carried you through the first marks of your obedience, animate you through all the offices of the most exalted virtue! I leave you, that I may be no obstacle to it, and beg you to consider whatever faults you commit to Elvira, I am the occasion: and while I fly from all commerce with you, to preserve my innocence, you will frustrate my endeavours, and make me guilty.

There is a pleasure in our very sorrows, when they flow for a worthy object: you can give me that pleasure, and justify me to myself; and by those very virtues that tear you from me, bind me faster to you, and give me a vanity in you; your happiness will be mine: I will not tell you, that I can forget you; it is impossible. The roses must forget to bloom, the birds to warble from the beach; the gay creation be undressed, and I insensible to perfection, ere your image can be erased out of my heart, or it can receive any other impression. A

heart

heart that has been your prize, cannot descend to a meaner sacrifice; no, the passion you have inspired suits the grandeur of your exalted genius, and must have the same duration with your virtue. I retire from the world, not to avoid, but to enjoy you more at liberty. We are never absent from those we love; every beauty that nature can produce, brings you to my thoughts, since you have pointed out all their various charms to me; taught me how to relish solitude, and directed my mind to entertainments above the reach of fortune.

That sentiment of tenderness I have for you has some emanation of Divinity upon it; while it naturally leads me to the contemplation of the Supreme Excellence, and directs my devotions to the Fountain of Beauty. Those hopes and fears which alternately elevate, or depress the mind, in all human expectations, vanish: the soul is at liberty to pursue the interest of another life, raises its thoughts above this little scene of things, to fairer, future worlds; breaks off the fetters that chain it to this world, and smiles through her prison, with a holy impatience, on the joys of immortality. There all human distinctions will be lost, and gold will have nothing to do in settling of them.

Perhaps the gay world will pity me, and think religion, and a cell, but a melancholy recourse; but I shall not find it so, while I am not secluded from the generous Monimia's cheering eye: her delicate and blameless sensibility of human passions (she to whom suffering

is a merit) softens every care, and raises every joy; while she descends from the height of grandeur to the gentle offices of the sincere friend, she forgets every advantage of fortune, till virtue in distress calls for her aid: her titles have no energy with her, but when they give her a privilege of doing good, and then she exerts them to their full force; she feels they cannot buy freedom to the mind; and that no calamity will retire in respect to them. Fate has so ordered it, that there is some similitude in our destinies, which reconciles me to mine; while she recommends piety and resignation with the strongest and most beautiful arguments, her own example; and fortifies my mind, by putting every virtue, by her own practice, in the most amiable light. Sometimes she sings a *requiem* to our sorrows; soothes them to peace with the most harmonious numbers, and I have the ease of seeing my thoughts expressed in hers, with every elegance; and when the serious soul exerts itself, she anticipates heaven, and gives a sweet fore-taste of the songs of angels: thus we baffle disappointment, and elude our sufferings; honours, wealth, and beauty, stand abash'd to see themselves despised, while Devotion claps her wings at this her fairest triumph.

You will, I hope, from what I have said, be satisfied I am not unhappy; and take this last assurance from me, that I can never be so, whilst you are blessed. You have annihilated every sense of sorrow in me; I have no tears, but when you claim them. *Adieu.*

LETTER XVIII.

TO LADY MARY, FROM HER SISTER JUST BEFORE HER DEATH.

I Come, ye ghosts; prepare your roseate bow'rs,
Celestial palms, and ever-blooming flow'rs;
Thither, where sinners may have rest, I go,
Where flames refin'd in breasts seraphic glow.

POPE.

This, my dear sister, is my long, my final adieu, till we meet in happier regions. The springs of life are running low, and nature, tired with human changes, longs to be at rest: the grave attends me, that mansion of silence and repose.

I soon shall close my weary eyes in peace,
And stretch compos'd, upon my dusty bed:

Oh death! thy quiet and refreshing shade
Shall yield a long, an unmolested rest
From all the fruitless toil and vanity
That dwells below the sun——

I have had an ill share of health for some years, and have lately had two fits of an apoplexy; the third my physician is so sincere to let me know will be fatal: I am now indisposed, and find some certain symptoms of its return; which makes me resolve to unburden my soul of its last pressure.

Forgive me, ye injured shades of my great ancestors, nor blot my name from your illustrious line——My dear sister,

P

can

can your rigid virtue forgive my fault, and plead my defence to my injured husband, when I am silent in the dust? Dear Lady Mary, will you not pardon a crime which is blotted out by Heaven? With that my peace is made, by a long course of temperance: weeks, and months, and years, are past, since the date of my guilt: the rising and the setting sun has been a constant witness to my devotions; the moon and midnight stars were conscious to my tears.

It is, as you know, sixteen years since I was married to Count Edgar: I have had two sons and three daughters; but shall I own this shameful truth? the eldest of the two brothers is not his! On a fatal night (let the horror of darkness cover it) I was, in my husband's absence, by the Marquis De——, seduced; it was not the contrivance of a formal amour, but the effect of inadvertency and surprize: Oh! where was my guardian angel in that loose moment, that interval of reproach and madness!

The subject is too infamous for me to enter into particulars; but I have full assurance this youth is not the Count's son, though his confidence in me, with his easy temper, kept him from ever making the least inquiry into any circumstance of my guilt: he has lately made his will; and to the eldest brother (being his greatest favourite) given his whole estate; leaving the rest intirely

dependent on this son, which, to my confusion, is not his own.

This secret, dear Lady Mary, I must intreat you to discover to Count Edgar after my death; that he may do his own children justice, and only provide moderately for the other: assure him, that it was only in this instance I ever wronged my fidelity to him; this is the utmost reparation I can make; and with a mind unburthened, I now cast myself on infinite mercy, and smile in the view of death.

I come, ye ministers of fate, I come;
But while I pass the intervening gloom,
Should rising doubts my trembling heart invade,
With musick cheer the melancholy shade:
In soothing strains a gentle *requiem* sing,
And touch with heav'nly art, the golden string;
The charming sound shall ev'ry care beguile,
And make the seats of desolation smile:
My soul, prepar'd by sacred ecstasy,
Shall learn, and join the chorus of the sky.

Once more, my dear sister adieu! Let my crime warn you never to be vain, or secure: from the height of self-confidence, and arrogant virtue, I was left to make this reproachful step to humble me. My repentance has been deep and sincere; and, through the Divine Redemption, my pardon is procured, and my guilt for ever obliterated. *Your dying friend,*

HERMIONE.

LETTER XIX.

A LETTER FROM ARISTUS, GIVING HIS FRIEND A RELATION OF THE SUD-
DEN DEATH OF HIS NEW BRIDE, WHO WAS SEIZED IN THE CHAPEL
WHILE THE SACRED RITES WERE PERFORMING.

MY fate will furnish you with a full evidence of the vanity of human happiness. My last letter was writ in the height of success, with the most arrogant expectations and boast of a lasting felicity; now it is all changed, the shadows of night cover me.

The lovely Erminia, whom I had so long pursued, and at last persuaded to crown my wishes, the very morning she gave me her hand, before the sacred ceremony was finished, was surprized with the fatal message of death; and carried

in a swoon from the chapel to her chamber, where she soon expired in her mother's arms: this hour she appeared with all the cost and splendour of a youthful bride; the next, she is a pale and senseless corpse, muffled in a ghastly shroud: those charms, that in the morning promised an eternal bloom, before the evening have dropped their smiling pride; the sparkling eyes are sunk in darkness; the soft, the tuneful voice, is for ever silent; while a livid hue sits on the late rosy lips.

Thus

Thus airy pleasure dances in our eyes,
And spreads false images in fair disguise,
T' allure our souls; 'till just within our arms
The vision dies, and all our painted charms
Flee quick away from the pursuing sight,
'Till they are lost in shades, and mingle with
the night.

O Death, how cruel was thy triumph!
youth and beauty, joy, and blooming
hope, lie here a victim to thy rage: the
darksome prison of the grave must now
confine thy gentle captive; instead of
the pomp of a bridal bed, the cold earth
must be her lodging, dust and corrup-
tion her covering.

You will now expect I should practise
the principles I have so often asserted, in
exercising my boasted reason and mode-
ration; or leave you to insult me with
the arguments I lately produced to allay
your grief, under the pressure of an un-
common misfortune. This reproach
would be but just at a period when
Heaven has given me a full evidence of
the truths I confessed, and set the vanity
of human hopes in the clearest demon-
stration before me. One would think I
should now, if ever, find it easy to
moralize on these subjects, and act the
philosopher from mere necessity, if not
from virtue.

Were the case your's, or any-body's
but my own, how many wise things

should I repeat! how fluently could I
talk! so much more easy is it to dictate
than to practise: and yet I am reason-
able by intervals; I am in more than
name a Christian; in some bright periods
I feel the force of that profession, and
pay homage to it's sacred rules: a hea-
venly ray scatters my grief, and cheers
my soul with divine consolations; the
gay and the gloomy appearances of mortal
things vanish before the gleams of cele-
stial light; immortal pleasures, with
gentle invitations, call me to the skies,
and all my thoughts ascend.

But how short my triumph! how easy
the transition from reason to madness!
Of what surprising variety is a human
mind capable! light and darkness, hea-
ven and hell, seem blended within; it is
all chaos, and wild disorder: that reason
which one moment relieves me, the next
seems with a just train of ideas to tor-
ment me.

See there, all pale and dead, she lies;
For ever flow, my streaming eyes:
Fly, Hymen, with extinguish'd fires;
Fly, nuptial bliss, and chaste desires:
Erminia's fled, the lovely'st mind,
Faith, sweetness, wit, together join'd.

Dwelt faith, and wit, and sweetness there!
Oh, view the change, and drop a tear.

Adieu.

LETTER XX.

TO LYCIDAS.

MY DEAR LYCIDAS,

THERE are seasons, when the
mind dilates itself, and, sensible of
it's own grandeur, breaks through the
limits of this lower creation, in search
of some unknown, and yet untasted
pleasures: this is my present disposition;
the wide limits of the sky have nothing
to entertain me: Nature seems exhausted
and indigent; should she uncover her
golden mines, or disclose the ruby spark-
ling in it's bed, let her open the veins of
sapphire, and shew the diamond glittering
on it's native rock—I have no avarice
of this kind; the orient clouds that now
adorn the morning sky, could I reach
them, would be a more substantial trea-
sure.—Appear, ye fairest blandishments
of sense; though lovely as the daughters

of Eden, your allurements would now
be lost.—Let Sensuality appear in all her
charms, the Persian delicacy, and the
Roman pride:—Let the pageantry of
state, the triumphs lost in long oblivion,
put on airy forms, and pass in their
visionary splendour before me; in my
present situation, methinks I could de-
spise them all. These scenes would be
but tiresome repetitions; for they are no
novelties to my active imagination; Cleo-
patra's expensive vanity, and Pompey's
glory, are familiar themes to my luxu-
riant fancy: their descriptions rather
tire than delight me. Even the mag-
nificence of the starry arch, the splendid
structure of the universe, I now survey
with indolence: I grow impatient to see
a new and brighter scene appear; when
these

these old heavens, and antiquated earth, shall put off their perishable forms, and stand dressed in immortal beauty, and undecaying excellence. Blessed period! why art thou so long delayed! Oh stretch thy shining wings, and come away!—Mend thy pace, old lazy Time, and shake thy slow-paced sands!—Make shorter circles, ye rolling planets!—Thou lingering sun, how long wilt thou travel the celestial road! when shall thy radiant walk be finished! when will the great Angel arrest thee in thy progress, and swear by him that made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is therein, that *Time shall be no more!*

My impatient soul springs forward to salute the happy period, and anticipates the promised joy.

Great Nature then, thro' all her different works,
Shall be transform'd; the earth, and those gay skies,
Shall be no more the same; a brighter scene
Succeeds; and paradise, in all its charms,
Shall be renew'd; but far its bliss improv'd,
Fitted for minds, to whom the mighty Maker
Shall give the glorious vision of his face
Unveil'd, and smiling with eternal love.

Here let me dwell, nor turn one careless look
On yonder hated world;—here let me drink
Full draughts of bliss, and bathe in endless floods

Of life and joy;—here let me still converse.
It cannot be!—Mortality returns!—
Ye radiant skies, adieu!—Ye starry worlds,
I must fulfill my day, and wait the hour,
That brings eternal liberty and rest.

My native element prevails, and I must return to my original earth again; but I believe you are not overjoyed at this event; you could have resigned me to the skies, in your present disposition: an earthly amour seems to engross your affection; and I should much more have obliged you, by a discourse of mortal charms, than of celestial attachments: but you must excuse me, my mind is in a position too sublime and delicate for these terrene nymphs; as fair as your mistress is, you have no rival in me; at this instant I am all for the immortals.

Oh, ye fair objects, ye untainted springs,
Of ev'ry excellence, that charms the sense!
Ye native beauties, ye primæval sweets,
That blossom in the skies; but for the hopes

Of these pure entertainments after death,
My soul would joyfully give up its claim
To an immortal state: for what is life,
Reason, and these capacities of bliss,
If lost on toys! No, I have nobler aims,
Desire unbounded by these narrow skies,
These gaudy, flying, transitory scenes;
Eternal glories, and enchanting beauties!

Next time I see you, on condition you will let me laugh, you shall talk of loves and graces, lilies and roses, flames and darts; 'till Chanticleer gives his last summons to the phantoms and fairies to disappear.

CLERIMONT.

LETTER XXI.

TO THE EARL OF ———.

MY LORD,

I Am just recovered of the wound I received in the duel, which you with so much reason and humanity endeavoured to prevent. I think myself now under an obligation to own the justice and force of your Lordship's arguments, and to retract whatever I said in defence of such an inhuman practice: it was frenzy that made me reject the advice of one who had so true a notion of honour, and whose courage had been so gloriously employed in the cause of liberty, and the Protestant succession.

You told me what the event of this mad adventure would be, that instead of

defending, I should expose my sister's innocence to the public censure: it is too late for me to wish I had been guided by your generous and friendly admonitions, which for the future will wear the stamp of infallibility on them; nor can I propose to myself a nobler example than your Lordship's in every part of human life; the generous friend, the tender husband, and affectionate parent, appear in their proper lustre:—Virtue, with a superior excellence, shines in your character, and enforces her precepts with resistless eloquence.

The review of your conduct is a severe reproach to my own; I shall never reflect

reflect on my late ridiculous exploit without confusion: whatever bravery I affected, I was conscious of the most slavish fears, in the midst of my insolent flights of vanity; deliberate guilt hung heavy on my soul; I spent the night before the bloody assignation in anguish which no words can express; infernal visions haunted my imagination; the caverns of night, the joyless abodes, disclosed their terrors to my distracted fancy.

But so entirely was I governed by the maxims of the licentious part of the world, that with great gallantry I challenged my own ruin, and bid defiance to death and damnation; exposing myself to all the horrors, dreadful to reason and nature, to avoid the imputation of cowardice.

So tyrannical a thing is custom, that it is necessary to ask the world forgiveness, for presuming to be reasonable creatures: people are often compelled to be mad in their own defence, and to act against their reason, to avoid being singular. It is hard indeed, that the ca-

price of mankind should expect an apology from the few that are wiser than the rest, for being awake and in their right senses; that they should be forced to excuse themselves, for keeping their eyes open, and having penetration enough to foresee a distant danger, and so much discretion as to avoid it.

A man resolved to leap from a precipice, might with a better assurance ridicule his companions for not promising to follow him; and more justly reproach them with cowardice, for refusing to break their necks, than men of honour can upbraid a person for not complying with their rules of valour, at the expence of his life, and all his hopes of future happiness. If my generous adversary had not spared my life, when it lay at his mercy, (while my salvation depended upon that important moment) instead of giving you this penitent relation, I had been now cursing my own folly, under the weight of eternal infamy. *Your Lordship's, &c.*

ANTONIO.

L E T T E R XXII.

TO VALERIUS, FROM AN ENGLISH MERCHANT; GIVING AN ACCOUNT OF THE ADVENTURES OF HIS VOYAGE.

I Am at last safely arrived in Holland, and have taken the first opportunity to give you a relation of the adventures that detained me so long in foreign countries.

In my return from the Indies, I had some affairs with a Spanish merchant, which while I was managing in one of their sea-ports, there came in a Spanish corsair, who had taken a rich Turkish prize, with several Turks and Moors prisoners, whom he offered to sell as slaves: I never had any traffick of this kind, from any view of interest; but from a motive of compassion, I had purchased liberty for many a miserable wretch, to whom I gave freedom the moment I paid his ransom.

Among the captives newly taken, there was one distinguished by the richness of his habit, and more by the gracefulness of his port. He drew all my attention, of which he appeared sensible, and still directed his looks to me; our souls seemed to greet one another, as if their

intimacy had been of a long standing, and commenced in some pre-existent period: there was something in the air of this young stranger superior to adversity, and yet sensible of the present disadvantage of his fate; while I felt for him an emotion, soft as the ties of nature, and could not but impute it to the secret impression of some intelligent power, which was leading me to a height of generosity beyond my own intention; and by an impulse of virtue on my soul, directing it to the accomplishment of some distant and unknown design of Providence: the heavenly instigation came with a prevailing force, and I could not but obey it's dictates.

The price set on this captive was extravagantly high, and such as would be a vast disadvantage to my present affairs to part with: however, I listened to the gentle monitor within, and paid the corsair his full demands.

As soon as I had conducted the youth to my lodgings, I told him, he was from
that

that moment free; the price I had paid was for his friendship and liberty.

'Then you have confined me,' replied the gentle stranger, 'by the most lasting engagements; I might have broke through any other restraint, but I am now your voluntary slave, and dare trust you with a secret yet unknown to the Spaniards: my name is Orramel, the only son of a wealthy Bassa in Constantinople, and you may demand what you will for my ransom.'

'You will soon be convinced,' said I, 'there was no mercenary intention in this action; the amity I have for you is noble and disinterested; it was kindled by a celestial spark, an emanation from the divine clemency, and terminates in nothing below your immortal happiness: and were you inclined to examine those sacred truths which would lead you to that felicity, and to share my fortune in a free and happy nation, the wealth of the Indies should not buy you from my affections: but if it is your choice to return to the customs and religion of your country, you are absolutely free, without offering any terms for your release.'

With a friendly, but dejected look, he told me, it was impossible for him to dispense with his filial obligations to an indulgent parent; but he positively refused his freedom, 'till he had given intelligence, and received an answer from his father; which he soon had with a *Carte Blanche* to me, on which I might make my own demands for his son's ransom. I returned it, with no other terms, but the liberty of all the Christian slaves he had in his possession; hoping, by this disinterested conduct, to leave a conviction on the mind of my young friend, in favour of Christianity. He could persuade me to receive nothing but some little present, and left me with an apparent concern.

It was some months after he was gone, before I could finish my negotiations in Spain; but as soon as they were dispatched, I embarked for Holland. We had not been a week at sea, before the ship was taken by a Turkish pirate, and all the men in it carried to Constantinople, to be sold as slaves: my lot fell to a master from whom I was like to find most barbarous treatment; however, I was resolved to endure my bondage, 'till

I could give intelligence to my friends in England, to procure my ransom: I was fixed to this, that no hardship should reduce me to give Orramel an account of my distress, 'till I was again in circumstances not to need his kindness, nor expect a retaliation of my own.

But Heaven had kinder intentions by bringing me into this adversity, nor left me long without redress. As I was talking in a public place, to one of my fellow-slaves, Orramel came by; he passed beyond me, but instantly returning, looked on me with great attention, 'till some melting sorrow dropped from his eyes: when making inquiry of some that were near, to whom I belonged, and being informed, without speaking a word to me, he flew to my new master, paid his demand for my ransom, and immediately conducted me to his house, where he welcomed me with the warmest marks of affection: he spoke—he paused—and was in the greatest perplexity to find language suitable to the sentiments of his soul.

'My brother!' said he, 'my friend!—or if there are more sacred ties in nature or virtue, let me call you by some gentler appellation; we are now united by the bands of celestial amity, one in the same holy faith, and hopes of a glorious immortality: your charity rescued me from a worse than Spanish slavery, from the bondage of vice and superstition; your conduct banished my prejudices to the Christian name, and made way for the entrance of those heavenly truths, to which I now assent. But this is a secret even to my own domesticks; and whether such a caution is criminal, I am not yet able to determine.'

With what rapture, what attention, did I listen to this language! I blessed the accents, that told me my friend, my Orramel, had embraced the Christian faith. An angel's song would have been less melodious: I looked upward, and with a grateful elevation of mind gave the glory to the supreme Disposer of all human events. The instinct was from above, that first moved me to ransom this young captive; thence was the spring of my compassion: it would be vanity, it would be the most criminal arrogance, not to ascribe this action to the assisting Deity.

The illustrious Orramel made it his joy, his study, to evidence his affection: he

he told me, his father died since we parted in Spain, and that he had left five daughters, which he had by several of his wives: he offered me the choice of his sisters, if I had any thoughts of marriage, and promised a dowry with her to my own content: one of them, he said, was privately bred a Christian, by her mother, a beautiful woman of Armenia: I was pleased with the proposal, and impatient to see my fair mistress. In the mean time, he made me a present of several rich habits, and two negroes to attend me.

The next day, he conducted me to a fair summer-house, whither he sent for his sisters; who were all so handsome, that I was distressed with my own liberty, nor knew where to chuse, had not a principle of piety determined me to the young Armenian; who was not superior

in beauty to the rest, but there was a decorum in her behaviour, which the others wanted: she had more of the modesty and politeness of the European women, to whom you know I was always partial: my choice was fixed, and the more I conversed with my fair mistress, the more reason I found to approve it. We were privately married by a chaplain belonging to the British envoy. My generous friend gave her a fortune which abundantly repaid all my losses; and after a prosperous voyage, I am safely landed in Holland.

I have sent you this relation, as a memorial of my gratitude to Heaven; whose clemency has returned me more than measure for measure, and largely recompensed that liberality it first inspired. Adieu.

L E T T E R S

MORAL AND ENTERTAINING.

PART III.

LETTER I.

TO LADY SOPHIA: THE SEQUEL OF THE STORY OF ROSALINDA.

YOU will find me, dear Lady Sophia, in a more gay disposition than when I writ my last letter; perhaps the fair season has some influence on my temper; the spring is now in it's prime, and blooming nature appears in all her various pride; the fields and groves resound with artless harmony; the linnet and warbling lark invite me often to rise with the fragrant morning; nor am I unwilling to obey the gentle summons, though, 'till I came here, I had never beheld the rising sun; the sight was as great a novelty to me, as a blazing-star would have been; the opening dawn was one of the *arcana* of nature, into which my curiosity had never pried. Indeed, I had read many poetical descriptions of the rosy-fingered Morning unbarring the gates of light, and decked in golden vestments, beginning her progress over the *eastern* hills; but I left Aurora to her rural hours, without the least inclination to trace her footsteps in the pearly dew. She was no precedent for me; I was too polite to open my eyes at such ungenteel seasons; the sun shone in vain, it's beams were useless 'till the modish world appeared.

But I have now conquered these refinements, and can bear the aukward custom of rising with the fresh morning, and going to bed when the dusky evening closes, or I might keep myself awake while every other intelligent being on

this part of the globe sleeps; when human affairs cease, and the calm creation seems lull'd in a peaceful slumber; except elves and fairies: I cannot precisely determine what hours they keep; but here is a nurse in the family who is intimately acquainted (as she says) with these sprightly phantoms; she has been admitted to their moon-light revels, and has led me to many a circle distinguished with perpetual verdure, where they use to dance their light fantastick rounds. Bridget and Joice, our two dairy-maids, add their testimony to the nurse's, and relate their own visionary experience. I am no great infidel; sometimes I believe, and always wish the pretty stories they tell me were true; but I dare not object against any of those relations, for fear of being thought a Heathen by the whole village.

My circumstances are now very easy, my mistress is fully persuaded my education has been superior to my present station, and treats me more like a sister than a servant; I am under no restraints but those of gratitude and justice, which will not suffer me to be idle, where I know myself to be dependent.

For a damsel of quality I can work well enough with my needle; and as this is all my mistress will suffer me to do, I carry my work to some verdant retreat, of which here are great variety, in a large garden and wide range of orchard join-
ing

ing to the house. I am delighted with old-fashioned bowers covered with woodbine and sweet-briar, and can sit as much at my ease on a bank of camomile shaded with laurel, as ever I did in a painted alcove. Maple-trees and box, with bushes of roses, are placed about in a very agreeable disorder; the whole scene appears gay, but wild above rule or art:

—While Nature here
Wantons as in her prime, and plays at will
Her virgin fancies—

MILTON.

The orchard joining to it is spacious and fair as the Hesperian inclosures; violets, primroses, and crocus's, embroider the level green, on which you tread; the trees are set in rows, their branches mingle above, and are now in their gaudy blossoms; the birds sit careless on the flowery sprays, and from their little throats pour out a stream of harmony; while fragrant gales refresh the sense, and with their aromack breath diffuse gladness to the soul.

Just at the bounds of this luxuriant retreat stands an antient oak; the extended boughs are a shelter from the mid-day sun, which perhaps your Ladyship would endure, rather than screen your beauty in such a rustick shade: Elysian groves and myrtle bowers are better suited to the delicacy of your imagination; but I am now reconciled to nature in it's greatest negligence, and, seated in this venerable recess, find virtue and liberty the principal springs of human happiness: my hours are here at my own disposal, nor am I obliged to devote them to ceremony or vain amusements. I find myself under no necessity to court the impertinent, or flatter the ambitious, nor to do a thousand unreasonable things, for fear of being singular and out of the mode.

The only intimacy I have contracted is with a daughter of the minister of this parish: they call her Sally; her conversation is perfectly innocent and agreeable, and has something in it charming beyond all the specious rules and studied elegance of the Beau Monde; she has spent her leisure in reading, and has certainly perused all the good books in her father's study, having never opened a page on any subject but religion, except *Argalus* and *Parthenia*.

Her preciseness is all natural and unaffected; her looks, her words, her whole behaviour, has an air of sanctity; one can hardly believe her an inhabitant of this world, but rather a native of some more refined and holy region; the sweetness of her countenance, with the surprizing beauty of her whole person, would confirm this thought, if some evidence of mortality did not appear in her declining health: she believes herself in a consumption, and talks of dying as calmly as most people talk of going to sleep.

However, this indifference is not perhaps intirely the effect of piety; a tender passion seems to have some share in it; her health began to decline from the time her lover died: he was the son of a neighbouring clergyman; their marriage was concluded by the consent of both their parents. There had been an innocent tenderness between them from their childhood, and just at the period set to crown their mutual passion, the youth was seized with a fever, which ended his life, and left the gentle maid to mourn her disappointed joys.

Since that she has no attachment to this world, all her schemes of happiness are in a future state, on which her whole attention is fixed; and nothing can be more sparkling than her conversation on these subjects. As some people grow dull and morose in talking of religion, it brightens her countenance, gives a vivacity to her thoughts, and heavenly eloquence to her tongue; the beauty of the spangled firmament in a clear summer evening gives her an apparent pleasure. 'In a little time,' she often says, 'I shall have a nearer view of those radiant wonders, and shall myself out-shine their glimmering lustre.'

You would be glad, Lady Sophia, if I would leave Sally with the angels, and talk to you of Knights of the Garter, Blue Ribbands, embroidered coats, and other sublunary things. There is such a wide extreme betwixt these subjects and heavenly themes, that I cannot introduce your tender affair with any manner of decorum; the descent is too precipitant. But if I must talk of love, my own amour is somewhat more of the ethereal kind than yours, and the transition will not be so difficult.

Nor will it displease you, to hear that my lover continues constant, with the addition of six thousand a year to his
estate:

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estate: it was left him by one of the S——r family, who lately died without an heir.

My mistress has been a constant advocate for the lovely youth, believing his proposal a vast preferment for me; while my generous lover makes his addresses with greater warmth and assurance than when his estate was less, thinking it now in his power to offer me a reparation for whatever misfortune hath reduced me to a state so unequal to what (he is persuaded) my education has been.

I have not yet accepted his proposal, nor discovered my rank to him; but it is very probable I shall do both. What objection can I, or rather what can you,

make against it? His descent is every way illustrious, and has vastly the advantage of mine; Nature has distinguished him with an air of grandeur, beyond all the borrowed lustre of titles or equipage. There is an elegance in his behaviour superior to the rules of art or imitation; not Paris, when confessed Prince on the plains of Ida, appeared more graceful: he talks of love, not in the strains of dramatick frenzy, but with the sobriety of reason and virtue: persuasion dwells on his tongue, while he describes the gentle passion in accents calm as the midnight air. What the consequence will be, I cannot yet determine. Dear Lady Sophia, adieu!

LETTER II.

TO LADY SOPHIA.

MY romance is now finished, the drama is come to a conclusion; I have been married these four months, and from the sober regular way of life I am now in, you must expect no more adventures.

I forgot in my last to inform you, that with the six thousand a year there was a seat nobly furnished left to——— What must I call him? not my husband, for fear the aukward domestic sound should give you the spleen: and if I should give him the appellation of my gallant, my lover, or the charming youth, you would think me run mad in romance: but I hope I may call him by his proper name, which is Lucius.

The seat of which he is now the possessor, looks like the abode of liberty and guiltless delight; the situation has something in it so jovial and airy, that it gives an alacrity to the mind: it stands on a gentle rising, with a view of a spacious vally before it, through which a luxuriant river draws it's shining train, and blesses the borders with immortal verdure; the wide campaign beyond opens a fair variety of hills, of groves, and fertile plains, which terminate in a distant prospect of the sea. You have this beautiful scene of nature from every window in the front of the house.

The opposite side of the structure discloses a quite different view; as that seems the triumph of nature, this appears the insult of art; the gardens and groves are so exquisitely fine and regular, that I

fancy myself in fairy land; it looks all like the effect of enchantment, and beyond human contrivance.

The loves and graces figured in the painted alcoves persuade me I am got among the immortals, who seem to court me to their soft recesses; when through a long vista the smiling forms rise in just proportion before me, I converse with deities, and am charmed with the wonders of the poetical world.

I find leisure enough for these visionary delights, being discharged from family cares by my husband's grandmother, who is qualified to manage those affairs with great prudence and decency: it is a pleasure to me to submit to her advice in every punctilio, as I find it obliges Lucius, who treats her with the utmost deference and respect: nor fails to find some handsome excuse for any thing that has the appearance of obstinacy or caprice in her temper.

His merit in every occurrence secures my esteem; an air of justice and benignity shines through his whole conduct; his mind was in the same elevation when his fortune was at the lowest; nor has this unexpected turn had the least influence on the modesty and evenness of his disposition: his management in every thing is at once generous and discreet; he has devoted a thousand pounds a year, out of the six thousand, to charitable uses; another thousand he secured to me for my peculiar expences; the rest to be spent in his household, the charge of which

which he has limited to his income, and pays his bills once a month with great exactness, that no honest tradesman may be injured by his delay. Whatever trespass is done by the carelessness of his servants, in the pursuit of their rural sports, he patiently hears the complaints of the sufferers, and restores their damage to the full.

His compassion is equal to his justice; never has he been seen to turn away from a spectacle of pity; never has he shut his ears to the voice of distress; never, by an insolent reproach, silenced the cries of poverty, nor delayed his bounty to the necessitous.

Several honest clergymen, with large families and narrow incomes, have already experienced his generosity, and blessed their young benefactor. He has taken a son of a neighbouring minister into the family, who was bred at the university, and is a youth of great piety, and very good sense; he reads constantly to us morning and evening prayers, when not a servant in the house is suffered to be absent.

Lucius has a handsome collection of English and French authors; his father lived long enough to see him instructed in both these languages; so that his books, with the conversation of the young student, are the agreeable amusement of his leisure hours, which are not so many as he seems to wish, his rank and merit still engaging him in a new acquaintance, there being several gentlemen's seats scattered about in this pleasant campaign.

I find myself more free and disengaged, having no companion but Sally: in her conversation I forget I am below the stars, and mingle with immortal beings; her sentiments are all elevated and refined, the language of heaven flows from her lips in accents sweet as an angel's voice; she has a surprizing memory, and speaks the finest parts of Milton by heart: I fancy myself among the celestial minstrels, when she repeats that description where

—— Their golden harps they take,
Harps ever tun'd, that, glitt'ring by their side,
Like quivers hung, and, with preamble sweet
Of charming symphony, they introduce
Their sacred song, and waken raptures high.

Mr. Pope's MESSIAH is another of

her favourite poems; which she recites with such a graceful pronunciation, that it seems always new and surprizing.

But while I am enjoying this agreeable society, I know it is a pleasure that is stealing from me, like some fair flower, whose bloom withers while I am regaling my sense with it's fragrancy: the young faint is bidding adieu to mortal things, and preparing for her native skies. I brought her hither, to try if the change of air would mend her health: but I see no advantage she has by it; and finding her impatient to return, I have promised to carry her in my chaise to-morrow back to her father's house. I go the more willingly, that I may make a visit to the peaceful abode where I spent so many happy hours.

I know not if my mistress has yet recovered the confusion she was in at the discovery of my quality. As for Lucius, it seemed to be no secret to him; he told me there was something in my behaviour, that convinced him I was not in my proper station; but by what misfortune I was sunk, he could never make the least conjecture: my conduct, he thought, was too reserved to suffer him to suspect any thing to my disadvantage; and when he found my concealment was on a religious account, it gave him the highest satisfaction, to find it in his power to place me in circumstances more agreeable and independent.

Two or three days after I was married, I writ to my father with all the submission and tenderness that natural affection could dictate. I am informed he relents, and is pleased with an alliance with this noble family; but I have not yet had the honour of any letter or message from his lordship. Oh, could I throw myself at his feet, and once more hear his paternal blessing, my happiness were complete!

The PASTORAL I have inclosed was only writ as a solitary amusement; which makes me send it without any apology, or giving myself the airs of being an author: I hope it will not displease you, that my shepherd happens to be a Christian, and that the pastoral scene lies on the British plains, as long as I leave you to wander at your leisure in the vale of Tempe, or follow your fleecy charge on the fair Arcadian pastures. *Adieu.*
Yours, &c.

ROSALINDA.

A PASTORAL.

HENRY AND LUCY.

HENRY.

LUCY, while resting in this verdant shade,
By Pow'r Divine thus elegantly made,
Say, can'st thou envy pomp and regal rooms,
Gay with the luxury of Persian looms?
Or painted roofs, whose beauty would entice
The thoughts through all the fabled joys of
vice?

Fabled, indeed! true joys it cannot boast,
Since pleasure flies when innocence is lost;
Remorse, despair, and ev'ry cruel guest,
Become the inmates of the guilty breast.

LUCY.

How spotless, Henry, is thy well-turn'd
mind,
Averse to ill, to follow good inclin'd!
With thee conversing, ev'ry day I learn
New charms in sacred virtue to discern,
And, emulous of thee, with joy pursue
That goodness I admire and love in you.

HENRY.

Thou need'st not learn of me; in nature's
book
Thou may'st on thy Creator's wisdom look:
And as the planets run their constant race,
His glorious footsteps in their order trace.
He bids the sun in all its beauty rise,
To bless our soil, and gild the vaulted skies;

And, by the word of his Almighty pow'r,
Ordains the moon to cheer the midnight hour;
While sparkling stars in solemn order wait
Upon her silent course, to grace her state.

LUCY.

Nor in the skies alone his pow'r is seen;
We view it in the grove, and flow'ry green;
To imitate whose charms all art is faint:
The rose's glowing blush what hand can
paint?
Or equal the pale lily's snowy hue,
Or emulate the corn-flow'r's glossy blue?

HENRY.

Sure, Lucy, we, like the first pair, are blest,
While here, secure with innocence and rest,
Our happy hours on downy pinions fly;
When thus assisted by Faith's stedfast eye,
Upon our Maker's works we humbly gaze,
And, for their goodness, render him the
praise.
Thus, in the Patriarchs days, the Jewish
swains,
Who fed their flocks on Mamre's fruitful
plains,
Worshipp'd Jehovah in the woods and field,
And prais'd his name for all the fruit they
yield;
Implor'd his mercy to direct their ways,
To guard their nights and sanctify their days,
But, see! the ev'ning o'er the dewy lawn
Already has her sable curtain drawn;
Homeward we'll go, and, as we slowly walk,
Beguile the tedious way with farther talk.

LETTER III.

FROM THE SAME: TO LADY SOPHIA.

MADAM,

THE day after I writ to you last, I
carried Sally home; where I left
her, not thinking, when we parted, that
we were to meet no more in this world:
but so it proved; she languished about
three weeks, and then, without any strug-
gle, or convulsive pangs, gently resigned
her breath.

With what impatience she attended
the happy period, the inclosed will in-
form you: she writ it a few days before
she died, and gave it in charge, to one
of her friends, to deliver it to me.

TO ROSALINDA.

DEAR LADY FRANCES,

MY sands are now running low; the
springs of life will soon cease; the
dust is returning to its native dust, and

the immortal part to its great Original:
the happy day is dawning, which shall
never be shaded with succeeding night;
some glimmerings of celestial glory break
through the gloom, and scatter the hor-
rors of death; I hear from far the harps
of heaven in soft preludiums call me to
the skies.

I shall shortly mingle with the morn-
ing stars, and converse with the first-born
sons of light; I shall enter the blissful
assembly, and be numbered among the
glittering attendants of the empyrean
courts; the Supreme Excellence shall un-
veil itself, and suffer me to gaze on un-
created beauty; I shall feel the force,
and breathe the raptures, of immortal
love; the smiling moments, crown'd with
joy and ever-blooming life, must now
begin their everlasting round.

The

The stormy ocean is past; the short fatigue fulfilled; the peaceful haven is in view: I am just setting my foot on the blissful coast, the charming land of love; the aromattick breezes already meet me from the fragrant shore, and cheer me in the last faintings of nature.

Dear Lady Frances, adieu! 'Till now I never bid you a glad farewell, nor parted without reluctance: but we shall meet in more serene climates; we shall meet in the fulness of joy, in the elevations of glory. Mine, indeed, by the just degrees of recompence, will be a station far below yours; my probation has been only the passive exercise of content and patience: but such virtue as yours, which has triumph'd over all the gay allurements of the world, shall meet a glorious distinction; the noble army of martyrs will

receive you to their number, grace you with the radiant circlet and victorious palm, and record your conquest in the annals of heaven.

I speak this to animate your virtue, to encourage you in the race of glory: I am now past flattery, or dependence on the greatest of mortals; but I feel the most tender concern for your happiness, and shall carry the gentle impression to the regions of exalted friendship, the native dominions of love, to which I am now going. Once more, my dear Rosalinda, adieu!

This Letter came to me with the sad tidings of her death: no language can describe my grief in it's just emphasis. You will give me leave to weep; and sympathize with *yours*,

ROSALINDA.

LETTER IV.

TO CARLOS.

AS you was the confident of my unjust design, in visiting Philander at his country-seat, you have reason to suspect I should inform you of the success of that adventure.

I had a secret passion for Aspasia before her marriage with this noble youth, and flattered myself with some hopes of finding her prepossessed in my favour.

You know how exceeding cautious and discreet I have been in my pleasures, and with what dissimulation I have secured to myself the character of a man of honour and sobriety: by this advantage I found it easy to impose on my friend, whose goodness was real and unaffected, while his unblemished integrity left him unguarded to all my artifice.

But I found it impossible to delude my father by my specious virtues; his penetration saw through that disguise, by which I had escaped the publick censure; nor could any thing have been more detestable to his open temper, than the affectation and hypocrisy of mine. After he had traced one of my most criminal intrigues, and found me unreclaimed by his tenderest admonitions, he resolved to disinherit me, and settle his estate on my younger brother, who is really possessed of all these good qualities to which, with a vain ostentation, I have only pretended.

My brother, perceiving my father's disgust, and the intention he had to make him his heir, with an unequall'd generosity gave me intelligence of the threatened misfortune, desiring me to employ some friend to dissuade my father from his severe proceeding.

This news came to me while I was detained a willing guest by Philander at his country-seat: I discovered the affair to him, who immediately offered to attempt a reconciliation; I gladly accepted the kind intention, nor knew any person so likely to succeed.

Philander proposed staying two or three days with my father, in order to insinuate himself the more successfully: in the mean time, I found but too easy access to the fair Aspasia; and, by an artifice that deserves the blackest infamy, prevailed with her to make a criminal appointment in a private garden belonging to the house.

This was the second day of her husband's absence; the happy hour (as I then thought it) arrived, when I was to attend my mistress in a sequestered arbour: but just as I was entering the walk that led to it, a footman came hastily after me with a letter from Philander, which brought me the welcome news of his success with my father. The vast satisfaction

satisfaction he expressed for having procured this reconciliation, with the real concern for my welfare, which appeared in every line, raised a sense of honour in my soul: I read the letter again, and found my guilt aggravated by it's bright reverse; my falshood was heightened by the warmth and fidelity with which the generous man had pursued my interest; my crime stood before me in it's most infamous view: but how to extricate myself from this perplexity, I was intirely at a loss.

To neglect an opportunity I had with such sollicitude obtained; to disappoint a yielding beauty; to dare the effects of her contempt or resentment, by acting contrary to all the gallant maxims of the world, was doing the utmost violence to a disposition like mine. But then, to wrong my friend with an evidence of fidelity in my hand, where every tender line would reproach such villainy; Alexander and Scipio (I told myself) would condemn me; with many an heroic Pagan, who, in the height of youthful desires, had conquered the allurements of a guilty passion.

It was happy for me, that some accident prevented Aspasia from following me so soon as she designed. I was so far from being impatient at her absence, that I blest every moment's delay, and was contriving to avoid the interview just as I saw her entering the garden.

I had been unused to mental devotion; and yet, in this dangerous moment, on which my perdition seemed to hang, I sent a secret prayer to Heaven for assistance.

Instead of flying to the charmer's embraces with the gaiety of a lover, I went forward with a slow reluctant pace till we met, and then gave her my friend's letter. As soon as she had read it, she told me, 'I might be assured it spoke the language of his soul; and it is,' added she, 'to the advantageous light in which he has set your character, it is intirely to that you are obliged, for the favourable opinion I have of you.'

'Is it, indeed, to this generous man,' I replied, 'that I am indebted for the

'share I have in your esteem? And can I return such goodness with the vilest ingratitude!'—Here I paused, still keeping a respectful distance.

Aspasia, with her eyes fixed on the ground, stood in a silent confusion: but, in this mute interval, imagine, if you can, what must be the conflict of my soul! I had spoke my last, an eternal silence must certainly have ensued, if the gentle Aspasia, perceiving my distress, had not put me out of pain for an apology.

'I see,' said she, 'the disorder you are in: this retreat of honour ought to have been mine; I sincerely wish it had been so: however, you have led me the way, and I owe my recovery to your prudence.'

'It was my importunity, Madam,' replied I, 'that drew you into this criminal engagement; for which I am going to inflict on myself the severe penalty of seeing you no more.'

'This was what I was just resolving,' answered the fair penitent, 'but you have gone before me in every step of virtue: we must indeed meet no more; some disorder I feel gives me a pretence to retire immediately to my chamber; and you may leave this place early in the morning, with a proper excuse for not seeing me.'

She was seated under a shade of jessamine, and appeared charming as the Queen of Love. My philosophy began to stagger, when she hastily rose, and left me in an agony of mind, which no words can express.

However, I had so much command of myself, as not to follow her: my reason exerted all it's powers; the Divinity within spoke with a commanding force, and bid the wild tempestuous passions be still. My soul obeyed the sacred dictates, while truth and friendship took full possession of my breast.

I hastened early the next morning from this dangerous place; and I must own to you, this action has given me a pleasure in reflection, superior to all the gratifications of sense. Yours, &c.

ALEXANDER.

LETTER

LETTER V.

TO CARLOS: FROM THE SAME.

AFTER your severest raillery on my conduct, I hope you will pardon me for being a reasonable creature, and not insist on my making an apology, for following the dictates of honour and gratitude. To your cooler thoughts, virtue may not, perhaps, appear so trivial and fantastick a thing; in your splenetick intervals, falshood and treachery will probably lose their charms, and put on an aspect of horror and deformity; when the sagacity of youth is past, and a few years have impaired your understanding, you may grow superstitious, and be whimsical enough to fancy friendship and truth are words of the most sacred importance: since it is not impossible for you to fall into such errors yourself, you ought to pass a charitable censure on my principles and practice, however different from your own.

I have ventured to send you this careless translation of Tasso's Enchanted Forest. This beautiful fiction seems contrived to arm the soul with a noble resolution in whatever occurrence it's virtues are called into action. Rinaldo's inflexibility, I hope, will keep me a little in countenance, though I have not the vanity to run a parallel between the young hero's exploits and mine.

Dear Carlos, adieu! Be assured I am too much your friend to leave any method untried for your reformation.

ALEXANDER.

THE ENCHANTED FOREST.

[TAKEN FROM TASSO'S JERUSALEM, BOOK XVIII.]

THE dawning light scarce hover'd in the East,

When young Rinaldo left his wonted rest;
Completely arm'd in all his martial pride,
A costly scarf was o'er his shoulders ty'd:
Unseen he pass'd along each silent tent,
And onward to the dreadful forest went.
'Twas now the season when the ling'ring night

Disputes her empire with the rising light;

A rosy blush here paints the doubtful morn,
There glimm'ring stars th' uncertain shades adorn:

This scene the thoughtful hero entertain'd,
As on the steep of Olivet he gain'd;
The dawning lustre, and declining night,
With various beauties entertain his sight:

'Ye num'rous flaming lamps above,' he cries,

'Which deck the lofty temple of the skies!
'Thou sun, whose face a golden splendour wears!

'Thou silver moon, and all ye sparkling stars!

'What trifles to your glories are preferr'd!

'How little we celestial things regard!

'A sparkling glance, the light'ning of a smile,

'Of heav'n itself our easy hearts beguile.'

Thus reas'ning, he the sacred hill ascends,
And humbly there with decent rev'rence bends;

Adorning, to the East, he turns his eyes,
His thoughts unbounded reach the inmost skies.

Meanwhile the morn in golden vestments rose,

Her visage with a bright vermilion glows;
New beams Rinaldo's crest and armour gild,
Which dart their lustre o'er the verdant field;
Refreshing breezes round him gently play,
And balmy odours on their wings convey;
While from her lap Aurora on his head
A cloud of pure celestial dew does shed;
Dipt in th' ethereal mist, a lucid white
His robes display, and stream with silver light:
Such when the morning's chearful rays appear,

Such lively looks the op'ning blossoms wear;
So looks, renew'd in all it's glitt'ring pride,
The serpent, when he casts his age aside.

The knight still to the wood his way pursue'd,

Nor any horror in it's prospect view'd;
The fatal forest, whence with sudden dread
The bravest soldiers of the camp had fled, }
Appears to him a kind inviting shade.
Advancing on, a soft melodious sound
Fills all the fair enchanted grove around;
The noise of murm'ring currents rolling by,
With sighing winds, which thro' the branches fly;

The swan in dying melancholy strains
In concert with the nightingale complains;
The organ, harp, and human voice, are found
Mingling their notes in one harmonious sound.

While

While from above, as others had before,
The youth expects to hear loud thunders roar;
Instead of these, the songs of Syrens finds,
The chant of birds with warbling waves and winds.

Amaz'd, he now his hasty steps suspends,
And forward now with cautious paces bends;
No obstacles his passage yet withstood,
Besides an ample, smooth, transparent flood,
From whence a thousand riv'lets break away,
Which thro' the shades in wanton windings stray;

Their banks were with luxuriant verdure crown'd,
And painted flow'rs adorn'd the smiling ground.

Rinaldo paus'd, when instantly appear'd
A stately bridge on golden arches rear'd,
Presenting cross the stream a spacious way,
Which he undaunted pass'd without delay;
Nor sooner touch'd the river's distant brinks,
But down the visionary structure sinks;
And what before in gentle waves roll'd by,
A torrent swells, and lifts it's billows high:
No bounds the sudden inundation knows,
Rising like floods increas'd by melting snows.

The hero fearless still his course pursues,
And wheresoe'er he turns, fresh wonder views;
For wheresoe'er he turns, a sudden spring
Appears, and blooming flow'rs their odours bring;

The lily courts him, and the fragrant rose
At his approach with brighter crimson glows;
Their crystal arms the bubbling springs display,
And living fountains open in his way;
The branchy trees their verdant pride renew,
From ev'ry leaf distils ambrosial dew;
The waters, winds, and tuneful birds again,
Join'd with the voice and lute, begin their soothing strain;

Nor yet appears to whom the melting song,
The human voice, and charming lute belong.
Suspended he remains, and scarce believes
His waking thoughts, or what his sense perceives;

When issuing from the forest's lofty shade,
And finds an ample plain before him spread;
A wond'rous myrtle in the midst appear'd;
Aloft in air it's stately head was rear'd;
It's height the palm and cypress far surpass,
And all beneath a closer shadow cast:
Around the leafy arms extended wide,
It tower'd stood, of all the grove the pride;
On the prodigious plant he fix'd his eyes,
Till more prodigious things his mind surprize.

A pregnant oak with sudden rupture parts,
While from it's trunk a blooming virgin starts;
Numbers like her their hollow prisons rend,
And on the plain in shining robes descend.
So dress'd, the graceful Cynthia haunts the groves;
Such are her nymphs, and such the goddesses moves.

Their folding vests above the knee were ty'd,
Their slender legs the silken buskins hide;

Their snowy arms were bare; their locks behind

Dishevell'd hung, and wanton in the wind:
Like these appear the beauteous sylvan race,
Who o'er the lawns the flying prey they trace;
No bows indeed they held, nor quivers wore,
But warbling lutes in their fair hands they bore;
A circle round the wond'ring knight they made,

And danc'd in artful measures as they play'd.

'Hail, lovely youth!' they sung, 'our lady's care!

'For thee these soft recesses we prepare;
'For thee she fondly languishes all day,
'And wastes her life in restless fires away;
'These groves thy absence lately seem'd to mourn,

'But all look fresh and gay at thy return.'
While with these melting strains they charm his ears,

A sweeter voice he from the myrtle hears,
And issuing thence a lovelier nymph appears.

If antient times, with pious awe inspir'd,
Silenus in his antick form admir'd,
What had the superstitious dotage been,
The mad effect of this surprising scene!
Her shape was human, but a heavenly grace,
And beauty all divine, adorn'd her face.
With doubtful eyes Rinaldo views the fair,
And soon recalls Armida's tempting air;
Then with a soft alluring pensive look,
Which meant a thousand tender things, she spoke:

'Art thou return'd, the cause of all my pain?

'Do I behold these fatal eyes again?
'Dost thou, at last, ungrateful man! relent,
'And pity my fond youth in sorrow spent?
'Or as an enemy pursue me here?
'For this thy arms and threatening looks declare:

'But I no enemy, no traitor fear'd,
'When o'er the flood the golden bridge I rear'd;

'When gaudy flow'rs along thy path were strow'd,

'And living springs to entertain thee flow'd.'
Approaching nearer then, she softly cries,
'Remove this envious helmet's vain disguise,

'And let me view again those charming eyes.'

With that a moving tear she fondly shed,
While from her cheeks the hasty blushes fled;
Then sigh'd, and downward cast her lovely eyes;

And soft complaints, and kind reproaches, tries:

Her words the coldest adamant would move,
And melt the most obdurate heart to love.

The youthful hero feels the kindling fires,
And timely from his dang'rous foe retires;
Again he scorns her wiles, and fiercely drew
His shining sword, and at the myrtle flew.

Armida

Armida runs before with eager haste,
Then twining round her darling plant em-
brac'd;

'Oh stay,' she cries, 'stay thy inhuman
'hand,

'Or let thy weapon in my breast be stain'd.'
Unmov'd and deaf to all her pray'rs he stood,
And lifts his sword to hew the fatal wood.

Th' enchantress soon another method
tries,

And as in dreams uncouth chimeras rise, }
She stalks a monstrous bulk before his eyes;
A dusky gloom her changing face o'erspread;
Vanish'd the snowy white, and youthful red;
Then like Briareus, with his hundred hands,
A mighty giant in his view she stands;
And fifty flaming swords at once she wields,
And shakes aloft as many blazing shields;
Her nymphs appear like horrid Cyclops arm'd,
But nothing his undaunted heart alarm'd.

The martial youth his sounding strokes
renew'd,

While hollow groans the sounding strokes
ensu'd;

Stupendous terrors fill'd the darken'd place,
Resembling now the black infernal space;
Thunder'd the louring heav'ns with dreadful
sound,

Echo'd in subterranean vaults the ground;
Trembled the earth, lighten'd the flashing
skies,

While warring winds from every quarter
rise,

Rinaldo stands the raging tempest's frown,
'Till one fierce stroke fells the tall myrtle
down;

Th' enchantment ends, the phantoms disap-
pear,

The storms were hush'd, the heav'ns se-
renely clear.

LETTER VI.

TO ALBANUS.

YOU seem at present suspended be-
tween virtue and vice; your mind
is in such a mysterious situation, that it
is not easy to determine to what class
you belong: one can hardly call you a
saint, the flattery would be too apparent;
and yet it would be a little uncharitable
to put you in the opposite rank, where
your own modesty has placed you: but
my business is not to dispute what you
are, but to give you the information you
desire, and from my own experience to
resolve on which side the advantage of
pleasure falls.

You imagine I have acted in both the
characters of saint and sinner, and tried
the extremes of virtue and vice: in the
last I am too much experienced; but this
makes me more capable of passing a cen-
sure; for I was a sort of philosophick li-
bertine, and pursued pleasure for the sake
of demonstration; I paused, I reasoned,
I made critical reflections on every enjoy-
ment; I proposed something beyond gra-
tifying a low and sensual inclination;
mine was a deliberate search after hap-
piness; while the method was wrong,
my end was right; but every guilty ex-
periment brought it's own conviction,
and left me restless and disappointed.

Sometimes I exclaimed in prose, some-
times in verse; I burlesqued the vanities
of life, and the weakness of human na-
ture; I turned moralist, looked grave,

and acted soberly: but this was a situa-
tion too cold for my temper, it was nei-
ther sleeping nor waking; this supine in-
dolence was but a poor exchange for the
jovial activities I had resigned, nor could
I assent to that spiritless maxim, that
virtue was it's own reward, if there
was no future expectation: *Let us eat
and drink, for to-morrow we die*, appeared
to me a much more rational conclusion.

However, this deliberation, this pause,
this moral essay and restraint of my pas-
sions, was the first step I made towards
real happiness: in the absence of sensual
amusements, my thoughts found leisure
for a nobler application; my soul grew
familiar with itself, and sought ac-
quaintance with intellectual beings; dis-
tressed with the vicissitude of mortal
things, it traced back it's own di-
vine original, and claimed paternal re-
fuge from the great Spring of all exist-
ence: I felt the attraction strong as the
bands of nature; that felicity I had
blindly sought, the unknown God I had
ignorantly worshipped, now revealed
himself to me, as the sovereign good,
and my peculiar bliss.

How an almighty Agent acts, no lan-
guage of men can describe; but I felt the
sacred influence, I heard the heavenly
sound, the soft melodious voice, calling
me away from earthly vanities; while a
ray of celestial beauty, sparkling on my

R soul,

soul, eclipsed the glories of the world, and darkened all the pride of nature; the mists of ignorance and error vanished before the divine illumination, which, with a pleasing evidence, compelled my assent to the glorious truths it proposed; my apprehensions were enlarged, and a sanctity of disposition infused; those heights of virtue, which I once thought impracticable, now appeared easy, and attended with ineffable delight, such as gave me some delicious prelibations

Of those immortal banquets, those rich draughts
Of vital pleasure, which my thirsty soul
Shall drink for ever in——

These are no fantastick delusions, but real and divine enjoyments, such as enlarge the mind, and give it a nobler disposition; while, conscious of it's own grandeur, it rests in nothing below boundless and immortal felicity.

This is what you seem anxiously to inquire after: how happy shall I be, if my experience can direct you in such an important search! You will excuse the sending you these negligent lines on a subject so superior to my genius.

ON HAPPINESS.

WHATEVER diff'rent paths mankind pursue,

Oh, Happiness, 'tis thee we keep in view!

'Tis thee in ev'ry action we intend,

The noblest motive, and superior end!

Thou dost the scarcely-finish'd soul incline;

It's first desire, and conscious thought, is thine;

Our infant breasts are sway'd by thee alone,

When pride and jealousy are yet unknown.

Thro' life's obscure and wild variety,

Our steadfast wishes never start from thee:

Thou art of all our waking thoughts the theme,

We court thee too in ev'ry nightly dream:

Th' immortal flame with equal ardour glows,

Nor one short moment's intermission knows:

Whether to courts or temples we repair,

With restless zeal we search thee ev'ry where;

Whether the roads that to perdition lead,

Or those which guide us to the stars we tread,

Thine is the hope, th' inestimable prize,

The glorious mark on which we fix our eyes!

Thy charms th' enamour'd libertine entice,

Thro' all the wild destructive paths of vice;

Th' advent'rous man refines on sin, and makes

In search of thee, to hell new-beaten tracks;

Enchanting pleasure dances in his sight,
And tempts him forward by a treach'rous light:

But while thy flatt'ring smiles his thoughts inflame,

Thou prov'st to him a mere fantastick name;

A fair delusion, and a pleasing cheat,

A gaudy vision, and a soft deceit;

Which while the wretch pursues with eager pace,

And seems to overtake thee in the race,

An airy phantom mocks his close embrace;

His arms in vain the sportive shade would fold;

Still, like a gliding ghost, it slips his fondest hold:

The disappointment heightens yet his rage,

And tempts him with fresh ardour to engage;

Successful, but unwear'd in the strife,

He still pursues thee to the verge of life;

With life compell'd his dotage to resign,

The last despairing sigh he breathes is thine.

The pious man directs his vows to thee,

And proves thy most pathetic votary,

Virtue itself, ev'n virtue he regards,

But as thy favour the fatigue rewards:

To silent shades, and solitude obscure,

Far from the world thou dost his steps allure;

But there he lives retir'd, a glorious epicure,

And gladly quits the fleeting joys of sense

In search of bliss more lasting and intense;

Not such as the fond lover's heart beguiles,

When without art his yielding mistress smiles;

Not such as fills the youthful hero's mind,

When wreaths of victory his temples bind:

His thoughts a nobler luxury would prove,

Such as the blest'd immortals know above;

A spark divine like theirs his breast inflames,

Enjoyments all divine like theirs he claims,

Licentious and unbounded in his aims.

To pleasure's sacred spring his soul aspires,

There only hopes to quench his infinite desires:

Not envious hell the passion can suppress,

Fir'd by thy name, alluring Happiness!

Undaunted he maintains the generous strife,

And struggles for thee to the close of life;

Then joyful clasps thee in his dying arms,

And yields his breath, possess'd of all thy charms.

This is the conclusion, to which I stand, after the exactest trial of sensual and intellectual pleasures; without hesitation I give my voice on the side of virtue, and this is the gayest period of my life, unruffled with adversity or disappointment, in the affluence of fortune, and the luxury of youth, with a mind capacious of bliss, and panting after happiness.

In this situation you cannot object against the severity of my temper: however, as few persons care to be wise at other people's expence, I cannot expect,

that without any farther trial, you will acquiesce in the judgment of *your most humble servant*.

LETTER VII.

TO LUCIUS.

IT was you that propos'd this subject to my muse, but I have hardly the vanity to hope the performance will please a judgment so exact as yours. However, it is intirely submitted to your censure, by *your most humble servant*,

LINDAMOR.

A POEM ON LOVE.

ASSIST my doubtful muse, propitious Love,

Let all my soul the sacred impulse prove:
For thine's a holy unpolled flame,
Howe'er the libertine profanes thy name;
Howe'er, with impious cant, hypocrisy
And senseless superstition blemish thee:
The pure result of sober reason thou;
Thy laws the strictest honour must allow:
Thy laws each vicious thought controul;
From thee devotion takes it's flaming wings,
Thou giv'st the noblest motion to the soul,
And govern'st all it's springs.
To great attempts thou gen'rous minds dost move,
And only such are privileg'd to love;
Th' heroic race, the brightest names of old,
Were all thy glorious votaries enroll'd.

Without thee, human life
A tedious round of circling cares would be,
A curs'd fatigue, continual strife,
And tiresome vanity.
Thy charms our restless grief controul,
And calm the stormy motions of the soul;
Before thee pride and enmity,
With all infernal passions, fly;
And could'st thou in the realms below
But once display thy beauteous face,
The damn'd a short redress might know,
And ev'ry terror fly the place.
From thee one bright unclouded smile
Would all the torments there beguile;
Thy smiles th' eternal tempests could assuage,
And make the damn'd forget their rage;
The sulph'rous waves would cease to roar,
And calmly glide along the silent shore.
Had Orpheus (as 'tis fabled) thro' the ground
To hell the gloomy passage found,

His warbling voice, his melting lyre,
Nor artful touches on the trembling string,
Had ne'er obtain'd his bold desire,
Nor charm'd the furies with their sullen king:
But love, his tender theme, had Love been nam'd,
That potent sound alone had all their malice tam'd.

On thee the graces and delights attend,
On thy propitious influence
Our gayest hours depend;
Whatever charms the soul or sense,
Beauty and sacred harmony,
Accomplish'd Love! belongs to thee,
To thee his shining graces Strephon owes,
His just ideas, and expressions fit;
To thee Cleora owes that sprightly wit,
Which from her lips in easy language flows.

The mute creation owns thy sway,
And things inanimate thy laws obey;
At thy command the first confusion ceas'd,
Chaos and wild disorder were appeas'd;
Discord and fierce antipathy grew mild,
The gleams of light thro' yielding darkness smil'd,
And warring elements were reconcil'd.
Nature begun a steady course,
Govern'd by central charms, and sympathetic force.

But in the blissful skies alone
Almighty Love! thy pow'r is fully known:
I here they view thy charming face,
Painted with endless smiles, and ever blooming grace,
Thy gentle torch burns there for ever bright,
And scatters round a mild propitious light;
All feel it's pleasing influence,
While pure desires thy golden shafts dispense.
Th' immortal lovers, crown'd with fragrant flow'rs,
In rosy shades, and blissful bow'rs,
To thee devote their happy hours,
While active joys, too noble for disguise,
And vital pleasures, sparkle in their eyes;
To thee alone, great Love, their heav'n they owe,
The boundless source whence all their blessings flow.

Thy sacred flame
Does ev'ry heav'nly breast inspire,
And tune the strings of each celestial lyre;
In flow'ry vales, to ev'ry blissful stream,
With melting notes, they celebrate thy name:

Backward they roll the long extent
Of ages infinite, and sing thy great descent.

No fabled Venus gave thee birth
At Cyprus; yet the goddess was not nam'd,
Nor at Idalia, nor at Paphos fam'd:
Nor yet was feign'd from foaming seas to rise;
For yet no seas appear'd, or fountains flow'd,
Nor yet distinguish'd in the skies,

Her radiant planet glow'd.
But thou wast long ere motion sprung it's
race,
Ere chaos and immeasurable space
Resign'd their useless rights to elemental
place;

Before the sparkling lamps on high
Were kindled up, and hung around the sky,
Before the sun led on the circling hours,
Or vital seeds produc'd their active pow'rs;
Before the first intelligences strung
Their golden harps, and soft preludiums
sung
To Love, the mighty cause whence their
existence sprung,

Th' ineffable DIVINITY

His own resemblance meets in thee:
By this thy glorious lineage thou dost prove
Thy high descent; for God himself is Love.

LETTER VIII.

FROM SYLVIANA, GIVING AN ACCOUNT OF HER MANNER OF LIFE BEFORE
HER MARRIAGE WITH THE EARL OF ———.

MADAM,
YOUR curiosity is very obliging, in
desiring to know my manner of
life, 'till I had the honour of being mar-
ried to my Lord——. The account,
indeed, would be perfectly insignificant
without that circumstance; it is only my
relation to him, that gives me a concern
for the decorum and propriety of my
conduct, in the high station to which he
has advanced me.

I must own, that my scrupulous dis-
sent from some fashionable freedoms,
makes my behaviour appear somewhat
singular and precise, among the gallant
part of the world: but I hope, in this
general toleration, I may, with indem-
nity, be a Christian, (though not a prude)
at sixteen. If this is an error, the pre-
judice of education must be my excuse,
which keeps me from giving my assent
to many of the genteel maxims of the
age: nor will you be surprized at my
nicety, when you know by what pre-
cepts the early part of my life has been
governed.

My father was a country clergyman,
a person of exemplary piety, who, with
a benefice of three hundred a year, treated
his poor parishioners with great hospita-
lity, and made a decent provision for his
own family.

My mother was bred a dissenter, and
continued such, 'till either her esteem for
my father, or the force of his arguments,
prevailed with her to join in communion
with the national church.

I was the eldest of three daughters,
which were all the children they had;

we were carefully instructed in the rules
of justice and truth, and bred in the
greatest sanctity of manners; no excuse
but sickness ever detained us on Sundays
from the publick worship; nor were the
intervals spent in any idle amusements;
the whole day was sacred, and observed
with just solemnity: through the rest of
the week, prayers were constantly read
mornings and evenings in the family;
nor would my mother ever suffer cards
or dancing in the house.

My two sisters were the prettiest de-
mure things that ever were seen; they ap-
plied themselves with great diligence to
assist my mother in any of her domestick
concerns: but my temper being more
sprightly, housewifery and plain-work
were my aversion; reading was my pre-
vailing attachment; and I had turned
over every book in my father's library,
except Latin and Greek: but here was
not one play or novel for my entertain-
ment; however, I was supplied with
amusements of this kind by my Lady
Worthy's youngest daughter, who was
our neighbour, and was pleased to honour
me with some degree of intimacy. But I
perused these authors with great secrecy,
and not without some inward remorse;
this sort of reading being against my fa-
ther's severe injunctions, and the pious
rules I had been taught.

This was my manner of life till I was
fifteen, when a brother of my mother's,
a Turkey merchant, died; and having
no child, left me twenty thousand pounds,
with only some small legacies to my
sisters. This advance of fortune gave
me

me some distinction with my Lady Worthy, who, about the same time, had a fine summer-house painting; the story was, Diana hunting with her nymphs. Her ladyship desired my mother that I might be drawn for one of the virgin train.

Some time after this painting was finished, my Lord ——— came accidentally into these parts of the country; and waiting on my Lady Worthy, as they were in the summer-house, he took particular notice, I know not why, of the nymph for whom I had sat to the painter. Her ladyship, finding my lord a little inquisitive, ordered a servant to call me to drink tea with them: I obeyed, without the least suspicion what was the motive of her command.

I had hitherto looked on every mortal man with equality and indifference; nor found any thing to answer the description of poetical heroes, and dramatic beaux: but the moment I saw my lord, every grace, every charm, appeared real, which before had pleased my imagination in agreeable fictions: the enchanting form, the fatal glance, the resistless smile, the gentle, the prevailing accent; Love, with his whole artillery, seemed to insult me, and never more intirely subdued a mind so artless and unexperienced: however, to conceal my disorder, I withdrew as soon as the company would permit.

But how transformed was my soul from that guiltless calm I had till now enjoyed! The equality of my temper was broken, my thoughts had all a different turn; I went to church, indeed, but said my prayers as mechanically as the clock strikes; I joined in singing the psalms, but with no more understanding than the chimes repeat a tune to which they are set: not only the next world, but this, was effaced from my memory; there were no flowers in the field, nor stars in the sky; my whole attention was fixed on the lovely youth, his idea was still in view; or if any other object interrupted the pleasing reverie, it was only to give me vexation: I was angry with every mortal, for not looking so handsome, nor talking so agreeably, as the charming man I admired.

I was some tedious days in suspense, whether my lord had one favourable thought of me; but my doubts were agreeably satisfied, when I found he had desired my Lady Worthy to

procure my father's consent, in order to make his addressee to me. My father embraced the offer with a just sense of the honour that was done him.

For my part, I had never practised any disguise, and was unacquainted with all forms, but such as were the dictates of nature and virtue; nor was it possible for me to conceal the tender inclination; it was as visible in my silence, as the most pathetic words could have made it. After I knew my lord's character, and was convinced of his affection for me, I had a sort of vanity in owning a sense of his merit: this, I thought, justified the height of my passion; nor could I find any reason to violate my native sincerity, and affect indifference, where it would have been a crime to have been really insensible.

My noble lover expressed some impatience to conclude the affair, which was done with great secrecy and expedition. He suffered but one servant to attend him; and was so obliging as to stay a month after our marriage in my father's family: the scenes of low life were a diverting novelty to him, while love and innocence made the hours glide smoothly on. This period was all pastoral and romantick; the golden age seemed to be renewed with Ovid's *OENONE*: I could have wished the noble youth divested of his hereditary honours, possessed only of a snowy flock, and graced with no distinction but that of the *Lovely Swain*.

Then unmolested we had liv'd, and free
From those vexatious forms which greatness
brings;
While rocks and meadows, shades, and pur-
ling springs,
The flow'ry valley, and the gloomy grove,
Had heard of no superior name to Love.

However, I did not yet know the toils of grandeur, nor feel the effects of my splendid vassalage; I lived my own way, dressed and undressed myself. My mother, since the advance of my fortune, had kept me in fine lace caps, and clean silk night-gowns; and, as I had plenty of flaxen hair falling into natural curls, my dress was easily adjusted, and seemed to please my lord exceedingly. The little waiting on I had was by Cicely, my mother's head servant; I had no notion of the *Grande Monde*, nor the part I was to act in it.

I had never seen London; the Mall, Hyde-park, the Drawing-Room, and Theatre,

Theatre, were less known to me than the planetary worlds.

In this state of nature, of darkness, and original simplicity, imagine to yourself what must be my perplexity, when my lord carried me with him to make my first appearance in town, among the congratulations of his numerous friends! I found myself among a rank of people, to whose language, habits, and manners, I was as much a stranger, as if I had been in a foreign country.

My lord had desired a sister, who lived with him, to procure every thing proper for me to appear with, and she spared no cost in jewels, or whatever else vanity itself could wish; she had been solicitous in her choice of a woman and chambermaid for me, and they were really two of the finest people I had ever seen in my life: my woman (being much older than myself) I looked on as my superior, and could hardly forbear making an apology for the trouble I gave her: I spoke to her in very gentle and submissive terms; nor was it possible for me to get rid of the secret veneration, which the gravity of her countenance gave me: however, my lively temper was apt to make some gay excursions; when I was at first initiated into the mysteries of dress, I was not quite so serious, as she seemed to think the importance of the affair required.

While my head was dressing, I was merely passive, as long as Mrs. Dupin suffered me to sit reading: I left the ball on my shoulders to be adorned as she thought fit; which, after two hours toil, I sometimes found swelled to such an enormous size, with flowers, feathers, and bits of ribbon, that I could not help begging her to reduce it to a dimension more agreeable to my shape, which, being slender, did not require a globe of that magnitude to adorn it.

But I was generally more inclined to cry than laugh on this occasion: the hours thus spent were an insupportable fatigue to me, nor could I answer to my conscience for such a vain expence of time; my being had a superior end; I was formed for immortality, which grand concern forbid me spending more hours at the toilet than in my devotions: I had been taught these antiquated maxims; and however ridiculous they might appear in the gay moments of health, the

approaches of death, I knew, would set them in their full force, and unquestioned evidence.

However, I had no design in dressing, but to please my lord; it was only with regard to him, I was concerned for the figure I made in public: the flattery I heard on my beauty, gave me more confusion than joy; nor could I account for the design of those addresses.

I very innocently told a beau that followed me, that I was married; at which he burst into a loud laugh: it was some surprize to me to find him so gay at the discovery of what I thought would have sunk him into despair; I could not but wonder, that the man who had just before been languishing and dying, should be so overjoyed, to find his pretensions lost, and his case hopeless; for I really thought he made love with an honest intention to marry me, only he had mistaken my circumstances.

My next lover was the most intimate friend my lord had; the fine things he said I took for railery: indeed, it appeared ill jesting with such a sacred thing as friendship, and the honour of a family; however, I concealed his extravagance, and treated him with a coldness so real and unaffected, that he soon recovered himself.

But you may easily imagine what a sound these gallant proposals must have to one so unacquainted with the modish world, and who have never heard those vices named, but with terms of infamy and reproach.

After this account of myself, you will not wonder to find me so little at ease in the high station to which I am raised: with what regret do I look back to the inglorious shades, the humble scenes of my past tranquillity! I was a stranger to ambition; but love seduced me from those peaceful retreats, where my first happy days were spent; it is only my affection for my lord that helps me to support this illustrious bondage, this splendid misery: but as sincerely as I love him, I cannot, without a sigh, recall the harmless freedom, the unmolested innocence, in which the earliest part of my life was past; and am surprized to find myself the object of most people's envy, while, in reality, I merit their compassion. I am, without ceremony, Madam, *your's, &c.*

LETTER

LETTER IX.

TO MR. A——.

I Have been contemplating on the period of all human glory among the tombs in Westminster-Abbey: here the most towering ambition finds it's limits; insulting Death has fixed the bounds, and pronounced the imperial mandate, 'Hitherto shalt thou go, and no farther;' and, 'Here shall thy proud waves be stayed:' The wildest boasts of mortal vanity yield to the dreadful conqueror; the glory of nature, with all the accomplishments of art, are humbled together in the dust:

Here, in one horrid ruin, lies
The great, the fair, the young, the wise:
Th' ambitious king, whose boundless mind
Scarce to a world could be confin'd,
Now, content with narrower room,
Lies crouded in this marble tomb;
Death triumphs o'er the boasted state,
The vain distinctions of the great;
Here in one common heap they lie,
And, eloquent in silence, cry,
'Ambition is but vanity.'

And see, this sculptur'd tomb contains
Of beauty the abhor'd remains;
That face, which none unmov'd could view,
Has lost th' enchanting rosy hue;
Those once resistless sparkling eyes
No more can heedless hearts surprize;
That form, which ev'ry charm could boast,
In loathsome rottenness is lost.

See there the youth, whose chearful bloom
Promis'd a train of years to come;
Whose soft address, and graceful air,
Had scarce obtain'd the yielding fair,
When fate derides th' expected joys,
And all his flatt'ring hope destroys.

There sleep the bards, whose lofty lays
Have crown'd their names with lasting praise;
Who, though eternity they give,
While heroes in their numbers live;
Yet these resign their tuneful breath,
And wit must yield to mightier death.
Ev'n I, the lowest of the throng,
Unskill'd in verse, or artful song,
Shall shortly shrowd my humble head,
And mix with them among the dead.

I am now reconciling myself to these gloomy abodes; I would grow familiar, I would contract an intimacy with death, in order to meet the grilly phantom without consternation.

But what I am here contemplating is only the dark side of the prospect, which disappears whenever my thoughts turn to the bright reverse: Death is then no more a meagre skeleton, followed with a train of terrors, but comes in an angel's form, with a gay retinue of heavenly loves and graces; he comes the kind messenger of my liberty and happiness, with a smiling aspect, beckoning me away from these stormy regions to the worlds of unclouded light: the scenes of immortality are opened before me; the palm, the starry crown, with all the bright rewards of virtue, appear in view. Oh, when will the happy period come, which ends this mortal story! But my friendship for you shall outlive the date of this transitory existence, and be the same, when I am no more, after the formalities of this lower world. *Your humble servant,*

THEOPHILUS.

LETTER X.

TO LADY ——; FROM A SYLPH.

YOU will find this letter on a bank of violets, where I have often the pleasure to seat myself near you, unseen; and never fail of being entertained with that vivacity and innocent wit, that sparkles in your conversation. However negligent you are of your invisible admirer, your earliest part of life has

been my care; my services claim the pre-eminence of all my mortal rivals, and give me a right to make my pretensions, before your heart admits an earthly passion.

I have followed your early rambles over the flowery lawns, guarded you on the verge of murmuring streams, and screened

screened your beauty from the sultry noon; I have fanned you with my golden plumes, and breathed the fragrance of the spring about you: by me the musick of the groves has been improved, while I have joined with the feathered chorus to divert you; the nightingale, for you, has prolonged her melodious strain, and from some flowery spray entertained you with her nightly serenade.

These harmless gallantries, instead of molesting, have indulged your tranquillity; for mine is an affection suited to your guileless inclination, and consistent with the most refined virtue. Indeed, this is the superior charm, the powerful attraction, that has gained you a celestial lover; those divine graces, those sparklings of goodness and generosity, that sacred impression of virtue Heaven has stamped on your soul, charm me beyond your lovely person; and yet I view your blooming beauty with delight, and find a guileless transport in your smiles: I am captivated with those looks of benevolence and peace, which scatter universal joy and alacrity about you; the guileless gaiety of your temper, and inoffensive wit, divert me; I love to mimic the sweetness of your voice, and repeat the charming accent in a thousand sportive echoes.

Were not the view of ethereal beauty forbidden to any of mortal race, I might insult all human vanity, and defy the most glorious rival among the sons of men; was I permitted to appear in the rosy bloom of celestial youth, with my golden zone, my purple wings, and glittering tiara, I should outshine the most splendid birth-night beau.

But I am not permitted to convince you of my superiority, till your date of mortal life is expired; and then if you continue stedfast to the rules of virtue, you shall be mine by all the engagements of celestial love; I will lead you in triumph to the blissful fields, and charming bowers, surpassing the most poetical description of Cyprian groves or Hesperian gardens: what you call palaces, and magnificent seats, are but dens, but dwellings in the dust, compared to the dazzling habitations of the aerial race; the region is for ever calm, the skies for ever unclouded:

No stormy winter enters there,
 'Tis jovial spring through all the year:
 Soft gales through groves of myrtle blow;
 The streams o'er golden pebbles flow;
 Fresh youth and love their sportive train
 Lead o'er the ever verdant plain;
 Ethereal forms in bright array
 Along the blissful currents stray;
 Or wander through Elysian groves,
 Or banquet in the gay alcoves;
 And oft in amaranthine bow'rs
 Repose on fragrant beds of flow'rs,
 While Musick, with her soothing strains,
 Warbles through the woods and plains:
 The hills, the dales, and fountains round,
 With heav'nly harmony resound.

But numbers fail, human language loses its energy, and grows insipid, while I would paint the wonders of the immortal world; neither can I describe, nor will you be able to conceive, these transporting scenes, till the happy time comes when they shall be unveiled in surprising pomp before you. Till then, I am *your invisible admirer*,

ARIEL.

LETTER XI.

TO EUSEBIUS.

IT is with great pleasure I obey you, in discovering the present situation of my thoughts, since the tranquillity I enjoy in this retirement is partly owing to those pious principles you endeavoured to instill into my early youth.

You was well informed of my passion for Lady Diana ———; nor can you have forgot how many excuses I framed to my father, to prevent his design of sending me into foreign parts, till all events succeeded to my wish, and I was

married to the charming maid: but the nuptial pomp was hardly passed before death blasted my happiness, and snatched the lovely prize from my arms.

The only way I could then think of, to divert the violence of my grief, was travelling, hoping by variety of objects to efface the painful impression: accordingly, I made the tour of France and Italy, amusing myself with whatever was grand or entertaining; I conversed with men of sense and merit, and some-
 times

times was favoured with the society of women of distinguished beauty and reputation; I indulged myself in all the little gaieties of life, within the limits of reason and morality; but nothing could blot the image of my charming wife from my soul; I brought back my affection for the fair departed saint to the mournful mansion where I enjoyed and lost her.

But here leisure and reflection had a better effect than a thoughtless series of diversions: though my course of life had always been regular, and governed by the rules of sobriety, yet till now I was a stranger (except in form) to any thing of devotion; nor had ever experienced the ineffable satisfaction of a virtuous mind in it's secret addresses to the Supreme Being. My soul had not yet reflected on it's own grandeur, nor considered itself formed for an infinite and unchangeable felicity.

Those grave and sublime authors, which were once the useless ornaments of my library, are now my serious entertainment; by these I have been directed to look beyond all the perishing scenes of nature, to that immutable state of happiness, which after a short probation attends the practice of virtue: my thoughts grow calm, my passions appeased, the goods and evils of time vanish into nothing at the prospect of boundless and immortal pleasure.

The great temple of the skies, the spangled arch of heaven, is frequently the place of my devotion; the open view of the gay creation, or the lonely solitude of a wood, inspire me with a sacred warmth: but oh! when the propitious Divinity, by some divine emanation, makes me sensible of his presence, with what contempt do I look back on the lessening world! how tasteless, how insipid, are all it's amusements! how calm, how peaceful, in those happy intervals, are the regions of my soul! it's wishes are answered, and all it's desires appeased: I have enough, I ask no more. Can they languish for the streams, who drink at the overflowing fountain? His benignity is better than life, immortal pleasure is in his smiles, and who he favours must be necessarily blessed.

Thus abstracted from human things, I converse with the great Spirit of the universe, and in the rapture of my thoughts often address him in such soliloquies as these:

' It is the dignity of my nature, O
' Supreme of beings, to adore and praise
' thee! But how art thou to be extolled
' by mortal man? the language of Pa-
' radise, the strains of immortality, fall
' short of thy perfections; the first-born
' sons of light lose themselves in blissful
' admiration, in search of thy excellen-
' cy; even they with silent ecstasy adore,
' while, veiled with ineffable splendour,

The bright, the blest Divinity, is known,
And comprehended, by himself alone.

' Who can conceive the extent of that
' power, which out of nothing brought
' materials for a rising world, and from a
' gloomy chaos bid the harmonious uni-
' verse appear!

Confusion heard his voice, and wild uproar
Stood rul'd, stood vast infinitude confin'd.

MILTON.

' At thy word the pillars of the sky
' were framed, and it's beauteous arches
' reared; thy breath kindled the stars,
' adorned the moon with silver rays,
' and gave the sun it's flaming splendour.

Thy glory in her silent course the moon,
And nightly lamps in their obscure sojourn,
The morning star with it's bright-circle
crown'd,
And early blushes of the day, reveal;
The circling sun thy greatness manifests,
Whether ascending from the eastern wave,
With glancing smiles he cheers the dewy
fields;
Or mounted to the zenith's lofty height,
He blazes with transcendent glory round;
Or down the steep of heaven he rolls again,
And ends his flaming progress in the sea:
From east to west thy grandeur he proclaims,
And through his radiant kingdoms spreads
thy praise.

' Thou didst prepare for the waters
' their capacious bed, and set bounds to
' the raging billows; by thee the hills
' were crowned with plenty, and the
' vallies dressed in their flowery pride;
' the summer and winter, the shady
' night, and the bright revolutions of
' the day, are thine; in all the wonder-
' ful effects of nature, we adore and
' confess thy power.

Thou rid'st upon the wild tempestuous
wind,
And flying storms obey thy potent voice;
Sublime on clouds thy dark pavilion set,

S

With

With shades and gloomy majesty involv'd;
Thy hands the pointed lightnings lance
around,

While peals of thunder shake the firmament;
At thy approach the kindling forests smoke,
And from their base the trembling moun-
tains start;

The rivers ebb and flow at thy command,
Observe their wonted course, or run reverse;
At thy rebuke the frighted waves divide,
And with stupendous motion backward roll
Their crystal volumes to their inmost spring.
Thou all things canst; thy mighty mandate
heard,

Necessity and nature are no more;—
Th' obedient elements resign their league,
And wonderful effects attest the God!"

These, my dear friend, are the enter-
tainments that brighten my solitude, and

free my soul from it's former engage-
ments; those fading graces, on which I
once doted, vanish before a superior ex-
cellence, as stars before the rising sun;
instead of repining, I adore, I justify the
great dispensing Power, that has removed
the darling of my affections to fix them
on immortal beauty. I have lost nothing
amiable or attractive, but what is found
with divine advantage in the fair Ori-
ginal.

I know you will congratulate me on
this happy change; it must please you
to find that your pious instructions,
joined to the sanctity of your example,
have not been intirely lost on, *reverend*
Sir, your most obedient humble servant,

AMINTOR.

LETTER XII.

TO THE SAME.

SIR,

I Have obeyed your commands, in
sending the inclosed: you will not
require an apology for an essay on this
transporting subject; joy and gratitude
will speak, however disproportioned the
expressions.

ON OUR SAVIOUR'S NATIVITY.

VICTORIOUS Love! how uncontroll'd
thy pow'r!

How great thy triumph, on that glorious hour!
The high-raisd thrones above look'd down
to see

The vanquish'd God a captive led by thee:
His splendour in mortality disguis'd,
The principalities of heav'n surpris'd;
Th' indulgent skies smil'd on the happy
birth,

While peace and joyful wonder hush'd the
earth.

Fly, rigid winter, with thy horrid face,
And let the soft and lovely spring take place;
Oh! come thou fairest season of the year,
With garlands deck'd and verdant robes, ap-
pear;

At once produce the summer's various cost,
Whatever sweets her flow'ry stores can boast:
Full canisters of Sharon's roses spread,
And dress with art th' illustrious infant's bed;
Rise the gardens, search the painted fields,
For all the blooming glories nature yields.

But, O ye products of the earth, how poor,
To heav'n's enamell'd plains, are all your store!

Perpetual greens, and never-fading flow'rs,
Enrich with soft perfumes th' immortal
bow'rs;

And yet he left the bright ethereal seats,
For these cold regions and obscure retreats.

Behush'd, ye winds, no angry tempest rove;
But sink in gentle whispers thro' the grove:
With all Arabia load your balmy wings,
And breathe the fragrance of ten thousand
springs.

Begin, you sweet musicians of the air!
Let nature all her soothing sounds prepare;
Let tuneful art her various measures bring,
Each melting tone, and ev'ry warbling
string;
Let psalt'ries, harps, and the loud cymbal
ring:

Let the shrill trumpets raise their sprightly
voice,

While Carmel, and high Lebanon, rejoice.

He comes, O Jacob, thy long-promis'd
King!

Celestial envoys the glad tidings bring:
O'er earth's wide compass to the distant main,
With truth and perfect justice, he shall reign.

The sparkling skies shall tarnish and decay,
The sun be quench'd, the stars shall fade away;
But he shall rise with a propitious light,
Stand at high-noon, and shine divinely bright.

I shall now leave you to your own sub-
limer contemplation on this unbounded
theme, and subscribe myself, Sir, *your*
most obedient humble servant,

AMINTOR.

LETTER

L E T T E R XIII.

TO A GENTLEMAN IN FRANCE, FROM HIS SISTER; GIVING HIM A RELATION
OF HER LOVER'S MISFORTUNES.

MY DEAR BROTHER,

AS my passion for Valerius had in it's beginning your approbation, you will not blame my constancy at a juncture when the unhappy youth has no other consolation: his misfortunes have brought those virtues into view, which in the height of prosperity he never found occasion to exert; and as his merit rises, you will not reproach me, in finding my attachment to him more steady and resolved, than in the splendour of his fortune.

You know how much my father piques himself on his quality, and how averse he was, when you left us, to Valerius's proposal, on no other account but his being a citizen, though a man of great virtue and wealth: however, this last motive, after some deliberation, prevailed; I was suffered to receive his addresses, and every thing was preparing to celebrate the marriage.

Valerius had always behaved himself in so obsequious a manner to his father, that he put a considerable stock into his hands, which the young merchant had improved by two or three successful voyages into Turkey; so that it was in his power to make a settlement vastly above my fortune, and far beyond my father's expectation: but while the lawyers were busy in drawing up the articles, an unexpected misfortune put a stop to the whole affair.

The father of Valerius was an honest man, but exceeding credulous, and was, unknown to his son, drawn into many engagements, for the debts of an extravagant brother, to whose interest the compassionate old man was too much attached. He soon found his error, being surprized with several arrests on his brother's account, for more than his whole estate could answer.

The unhappy youth was quickly informed of his father's distress, and flew to his relief with all the speed that filial piety could give. One of their friends, who was present, told me, there never was a more moving interview; after a

long pause of silent sorrow, the old gentleman charged his son not to involve himself in any streights on his account, but leave him to suffer the effects of his own imprudence.

'I know,' continued he, 'the happiness of your life depends on your marriage with the gentle Lemira, which will be intirely frustrated by your being concerned in this affair; nor is your whole fortune sufficient to disengage me from this confinement; but death will soon bring me a full discharge from a perplexity, into which my too great credulity, and ill-placed compassion, has betrayed me: yet this, and any thing, I can endure with fortitude, rather than you shall ruin your own fortune to extricate mine. Pray leave me,' said he; 'the concern your looks discover is at present my heaviest affliction.'

The sorrowful youth immediately withdrew, and sending for all the creditors, found that his whole stock, except what was at sea, added to his father's, would hardly do justice to many honest traders demands, who must be ruined, with their families, without satisfaction: but to whatever exigence he reduced himself, he resolved to discharge his father, which he soon accomplished by a handsome composition.

Valerius's whole dependance now was on the return of the Turkey fleet, where he had considerable effects: but my father was so angry with him for engaging in his father's affairs, that he forbid me ever seeing or thinking any more of him as a lover. Nor did the torrent of his adversity stop here; for within a few days he had intelligence, that two ships belonging to him, richly laden, were in their return taken by a Spanish pirate.

I was soon informed of this disaster, and writ immediately to Valerius, in the softest language that a passion like mine could dictate; and (to conceal nothing from you) I offered to marry him, and put into his possession that part of my fortune

tune which was left by my aunt, entirely in my own power. If you should condemn this romantic instance of affection in me, you will certainly approve the conduct of my young philosopher, who, in this crisis of love and adversity, could act with such composure and true greatness of mind, as you will find expressed in the following letter.

TO LEMIRA.

THE distress I am in, too generous Lemira, has not reduced me to such an abject disposition, as by accepting the offer you make me of your fortune, to betray you into a state of necessity and contempt, on so low a motive as my own interest: far be such a selfish view for ever from my soul! You wrong me, and your own charms, if you think the passion they have inspired, will suffer me to act any thing unbecoming it's grandeur. However my fortunes are sunk, my mind keeps it's native elevation, and is untainted with any selfish or mercenary design. If I loved you less, I might perhaps (abstracted from your happiness) pursue my own, and leave you at leisure to repent your rashness, and curse the mercenary wretch that was the instrument of your ruin.

Your father has forbid your marrying me, on the forfeiture of his blessing; and shall I rob you of that, and bring the weight of a paternal curse on your head! Shall I seduce you from the affluence and splendour of fortune, to share in my distresses, and struggle with the inconveniences of low life! Could I see you reduced to want and obscurity, in hopes it might be a solace to my own misery, and lessen my lot of human cares! No, let me stand acquitted by heaven and earth of such baseness as this.

Will you call this coldness? will you term it indifference, and not rather the utmost effort of affection, the triumph of a generous passion? Oh, Lemira, you are dearer to me than life! next to Heaven, I love you. In parting with you, I abandon every earthly joy; I quit my whole share of human happiness, and must sink into the last dejection, if religion did not support me with it's divine consolations.

And here the morning seems to break, a gleam of peace salutes me, some pre-saging hopes of a prosperous catastrophe smile through the darkness; nothing is

impossible to an almighty Power; there are virtues to which Heaven has annexed promises of a present retribution: it was in the practice of the great duties of morality I fell into this extremity; and here the divine veracity has engaged itself to secure me; all events are in the hands of the Sovereign Disposer; his will makes nature and necessity; no obstacle puts a stand to his designs, nor obstructs the course of Providence; perpetual beneficence has not diminished his stores, nor are the springs of his mercy exhausted. I must own I have received some consolation from the verses inclosed, which were written by one of my friends in very distressed circumstances. I must bid you an unwilling adieu. *Yours, &c.*

VALERIUS.

ON THE DIVINE VERACITY.

BE hush'd, my griefs; 'tis his almighty will,
That rules the storms, and bids you all be still;
Be calm, ye tempests; vanish ev'ry care,
While with triumphant faith my soul
draws near
To God in all the confidence of pray'r.
He has not bid me seek his face in vain,
Talk to the winds, or to the waves complain;
He hears the callow ravens from their nest,
By him their eager cravings are redress'd;
Young lions thro' the desert roar their wants;
He marks them, and the wild petition grants;
The gaping furrows thirst, nor thirst in vain,
(Parch'd by the noon-day sun) for timely
rain;
With silent suits the fair declining flow'rs
Request, and gain, the kind refreshing
show'rs.
And will th' Almighty Father turn away,
Nor hear his darling offspring when they
pray?
No breach of faithfulness his honour stains,
With day and night his word unchang'd re-
mains;
The various ordinances of the sky
Stand forth his glorious witnesses on high;
Summer and winter, autumn and the spring,
For him by turns their attestations bring;
Unblemish'd his great league with nature
stands,
And full reliance on his truth demands:
Nothing that breathes a second deluge fears,
When in the clouds the radiant bow appears.
Can the Most High like man at random
speak,
Forfeit his honour, and his promise break?

Does

Does he that falsely swears, his vengeance
claim?

And shall he stain his own tremendous name?
The earth, the heavens were witness when he
swore

By his great Self; what would thy fears have
more?

And had a greater than himself been found,
That greater had the high engagement bound.

Shall fleeting winds th' Almighty's words
disperse,

Or breathing dust his solemn oath reverse?

Can he like man, unconstant man, repent?

Shall any chance, or unforeseen event,

Start up, his settled purpose to prevent?

Or can he fail in the expected hour,

A stranger to his own extent of power?

What profit can a worm his Maker bring,

That he should flatter such a worthless thing?

Why should he condescend to mind my tears,

Or calm with soft deluding words and fears?

Can he (of perfect happiness possessor)

Deride the woes that human life molest,

Or mock the hopes that on his goodness
rest?

Nature may change her course, confusion
reign,

And men expect the rising sun in vain;

But should th' eternal truth and promise fail,

Infernal night and horror must prevail;

The thrones of light would shake, th' angelic
pow'rs

Would stop their harps amidst the blissful
bow'rs.

No more the soft, the sweet melodious strain,

Would gently glide along the happy plain;

No more would tuneful Hallelujahs rise,

And shouts triumphant fill the sounding skies:

Each heav'nly countenance a sullen air

Of grief and anxious diffidence, would wear.

The golden palaces, the splendid seats,

The flow'ry mansions, and these soft retreats,

The rosy shades, and sweet delicious streams,
Would disappear like transitory dreams.

Angels themselves their brightest hopes
recline

On nothing more unchangeable than mine.

Am I deceiv'd? What can their charter be?

Fair seraphim may be deceiv'd like me:

If goodness and veracity divine

Can fail, their heav'n's an airy dream like
mine.

But, oh! I dare the glorious venture make,

And lay my soul and future life at stake;

Be earth, be heaven, at desp'rate hazard lost,

If here my faith should prove an empty boast!

Whate'er your arts, ye pow'rs of hell,
suggest,

The truth of God undaunted I attest:

Produce your annals with insulting rage,

Bring out your records, shew the dreadful
page,

One instance where th' Almighty broke his
word,

Since first the race of men his name ador'd;

In gloomy characters point out the hour,

Exert your malice, summon all your pow'r;

With rites infernal all your pomp display,

And mark with horror the tremendous day;

Confus'd, you search your dreadful rolls in
vain,

Th' eternal honour shines without a stain,

Unblemish'd shines in men and angels view;

*Just are thy ways, thou King of saints, and
true!*

I inclosed this letter, my dear brother,
to shew you, with what equality of mind
the generous youth behaves himself in
this distress. I beg you would hasten
your return to England, in compassion to
your unhappy friend and sister,

LEMIRA.

LETTER XIV.

TO HERMINIUS.

I Have just reason to fear my essay
on this noble subject will not answer
your expectation; with whatever fluency
I could express myself, when inspired by
mortal beauty, the pomp of language
fails me. Here the boldest figures lose
their emphasis, and grow insipid on this
superior theme.

DIVINE LOVE.

FOR thee, fond Love, my darling theme,
My lute has oft been strung;
Thy pow'r, by ev'ry answering stream,
In gentle notes I sung;

Laurinda taught my muse her art;
And fill'd with tender fires my heart;
She taught me how to paint thy beauteous
face,

Thy charming form, and ev'ry moving grace.

But who shall guide the darling strain,

Celestial Love! that aims at thee,

Thou fairest offspring of the Deity?

I call the pow'rs of harmony in vain,

In vain the softest accents I employ;

The brightest metaphors in vain I chuse,

With all the melting language lovers use

To tell their pain, or speak their rising joy.

All the heights of pure desire,

Holy love, and heavenly fire,

At once my panting breast inspire:

Such

Such ardour smiling martyrs know,
When, defying every foe,
In triumph on to death they go.
Tell me, Thou, for whom I prove
All the fierce extremes of love,
How thy charms, so far retir'd
From mortal sense, have all my bosom fir'd:
Greatness and fame, beauty and harmony,
Are all but empty names, compar'd with
Thee:

Be thou but mine,
The whole creation I at once resign.
Vanish, thou earth, and every gaudy scene
Of hill and dale, or grove, or flow'ry field,
When by the spring adorn'd with cheerful
green:
Vanish, whate'er delights thou else canst
yield.

Thou sun, be dark; and let eternal night
Conceal thy vital splendour from my
sight.

Thou moon, and ev'ry gay ethereal fire,
Burn out your golden store;
I shall be blest, when all your lights expire,
And earth, and sea, and skies, shall be no more!

Place me where infernal night,
And endless horror reign;
Where, banish'd far from hope and light,
Unhappy ghosts complain:
Ev'n there, one gentle smile of thine
Th' eternal gloom would chase;

Immortal day would on me shine,
And pleasure fill the place.

Should heav'n surround me with full tide
of joy,
And open all it's glories to my sight,
One frown of thine would all that heav'n
destroy,
And wither my delight;
One frown of thine th' immortal groves
would blast,
And darkness o'er the blissful regions cast.

You that sing in happy bow'rs,
And in unmingled pleasures pass the hours,
That know the height of heav'nly bliss,
Come play me some soft air of Paradise;
Gently strike your sweetest strings,
And touch my soul on all it's tender springs,
While, rising on the musick's downy wings,
I'll bid at once mortality adieu,
And love and paint the sacred flame like you.

But, my dear Herminius, the present
performance will convince you, that I
have not yet learnt the strains of immor-
tality; and, perhaps, you will not think
it necessary for me to make an apology
for not being an angel: however, if I can
contribute to your entertainment as a
mere mortal, you may command *your*
most humble servant,

EVANDER.

LETTER XV.

TO ALONZO.

YOU have spent so many happy
hours at the Earl of ———'s
fine seat in the country, that 'tis unne-
cessary to describe those beautiful scenes,
with which you are so well acquainted.
Here I have passed a great part of the
summer season, in a manner suited to my
contemplative humour. Having no taste
for country diversions, or any kind of
rural sports, my pleasures were confined
to the charming shades and gardens,
with which the house is surrounded.

Here I enjoyed an unmolested tranquil-
lity, 'till a fit of curiosity led me to make
an excursion into the wide campaign,
that opened before me from the borders
of the park.

If I begin with the rosy dawn, you
will pardon my romantick style, in re-
lating the surprising adventure: but,
without telling a lye, the morning was
yet dusky; the balmy dew, and fragrant
gales, perfumed the air with their un-
tainted sweets; while, with thoughts free

as the airy songsters that warble on the
branches, I wandered from rising hills
to winding vales, through flowery lawns
to leafy woods, 'till I found myself un-
der the shade of a venerable row of elms,
which put me in mind of Sir Roger de
Coverley's rookery; the aged trees shot
their heads so high, that, to one who
passed under them, the crows and rooks,
which rested on their tops, seemed to be
cawing in another region. I was de-
lighted with the noise, while, with the
Spectator, I considered it as a kind of
natural prayer to that Being, who sup-
plies the wants of his whole creation; my
thoughts were inspired with a pleasing
gratitude to the beneficent Father of the
universe, 'till the sequel of my devotion
was interrupted by the sight of a beau-
tiful girl, about four or five years old,
sitting on the grass, with a basket of
flowers in her lap, which she was stick-
ing in the snowy fleece of a little lamb,
that stood tamely by her.

I began

I began to hope it was one of the fairy race, or some pretty phantom that haunted the grove; for the adjacent house belonging to this reverend avenue looked more like a dormitory for the dead, than an habitation for the living; every thing about it appeared ruinous and desolate; I could neither hear the voice, nor trace the steps of mortal men in this absolute solitude; nor had I any hopes of knowing into what wild region I was got, unless the pretty figure sitting on the grass could give me some intelligence.

I made my approaches very respectfully: but what was my surprize, in drawing near, to find the air, the complexion, every feature in miniature, of the ungrateful Aurelia, on whom I once so passionately doated! A thousand tormenting ideas rushed into my mind at the sight of this lovely creature, who smiled on me with the most enchanting innocence. While I stood eagerly gazing at her, which was not long, Aurelia herself entered the walk, and confirmed my suspicion, that this child was a living proof of her infamy.

'Tis about six years since she eloped from the public view, regardless of her own illustrious family, or the obligations she was under to the generous Cleone, who treated her with the utmost confidence, and was the last that suspected her husband's criminal affair with her. — Be my own wrongs forgot, and all the contempt with which she treated whatever proposals honour, and a disinterested passion, could make.

I found her now an object of pity, rather than resentment; the dejection of her mind was visible in her pale haggard looks, and the wretched negligence of her habit. I could hardly persuade myself this was the celebrated thing that once appeared in all public places with such a parade of equipage and vanity.

She was in the utmost confusion at this interview, till excusing myself, I told her, this intrusion was undesigned, and purely the effect of chance, as I was taking a morning's ramble from the Earl of ———'s, where I had spent some time; and that she might depend on my word, not to discover her abode to any one in that family.

By this time she was a little composed, and invited me to rest myself after my walk: I followed her into the house, which looked more like the mansions of despair, than a retreat for a lady of plea-

sure; an awful silence reigned in every room, through which I made a shift to find my way by a dim twilight, that glimmered through some windows of as antique a figure as those of an old abbey: the furniture, I fancy, has not been displaced from times immemorable; it looks more like unwieldy lumber, than any thing designed for use or ornament: there was nothing of a modern date but a tea-table, and that in ruinous circumstances.

It was now about ten o'clock: Aurelia ordered tea and chocolate to be brought; all her attendance was a fresh-coloured country lass, who withdrew as soon as we had breakfasted.

I was impatient to hear a relation of Aurelia's misfortunes, but durst not ask any question, for fear it would look like insulting her distress; only renewed my excuses for interrupting her privacy.

To which she replied—' That though I was the last person in the world she should have chose to be a witness of her infamy, yet she thought herself happy, in having an opportunity to make some apology for her injustice to me, in refusing those terms of honour I once offered, and complying with such reproachful conditions, as had made her the most miserable creature on earth.

' It was my criminal inclination,' continued she, ' for Cassander, that made me inflexible to your entreaties, and my father's commands to marry you. But whatever wrong this was to your merit, my guilt, with regard to the generous Cleone, is of a higher nature: the intrigue I had with her husband was attended with circumstances of the blackest treachery: I had broke through the tenderest engagements of friendship, and granted all that my dissolute lover could ask; when finding myself with child, to hide my infamy, he brought me to this dismal place, an old mansion-house belonging to his family, where I am cut off from human society, except two or three stupid peasants, his tenants, who reside in some part of this Gothic structure. 'Tis now six years since I have breathed and slept, (for I cannot call it living) in this melancholy confinement, without hopes of a release, being entirely dependent on Cassander's allowance and caprice, who but too well knows his own power,

‘ power, and my folly; which makes
 ‘ him, instead of the humble lover, act
 ‘ the imperious tyrant. His visits are
 ‘ seldom, his stay short, and I am left
 ‘ whole months to languish alone in a
 ‘ detested solitude.

‘ This child,’ continued she, weeping,
 and taking the lovely creature in her
 arms, ‘ this child, which might have
 ‘ been my joy, proves my greatest af-
 ‘ fliction: should I die, she is immediately
 ‘ abandoned to hardship and necessity;
 ‘ should I live, it distracts me to think
 ‘ she may follow my scandalous exam-
 ‘ ple. How can I give her instructions
 ‘ to avoid those vices which my prac-
 ‘ tice approves? or recommend that vir-
 ‘ tue, whose sacred rules I have so open-
 ‘ ly violated? And still I love this
 ‘ worthless man: were I penitent, could
 ‘ I resolve on a reformation, this leisure
 ‘ and retirement would be a blessing,
 ‘ an advantage to me; but I am obsti-
 ‘ nate in guilt, while I despair of happi-
 ‘ ness in this world, or the next. Till I
 ‘ came hither, my hours were spent in
 ‘ frolick and gaiety; a constant series

‘ of diversions shortened the days, and
 ‘ gave wings to the jovial hours, which
 ‘ now have leaden feet, and, burdened
 ‘ with grief, lag heavily along. No
 ‘ sort of reflection gives me joy; whe-
 ‘ ther I look backward or forward, all
 ‘ is darkness and confusion; I am no
 ‘ way qualified for retirement: books
 ‘ are my aversion, thinking is my hor-
 ‘ ror; I am weary of living, and afraid
 ‘ to die.’

I heard this account with a heart full
 of compassion, and said what I could to
 persuade her to break off this criminal
 commerce with Cassander, and throw
 herself on the care of Providence, and
 the generosity of her friends: but I had
 too much value for my own peace, and
 too great a contempt for a woman of
 Aurelia’s character, to make any parti-
 cular proposals for her freedom; and
 bidding her adieu, hastened back to the
 earl’s without saying one word of my
 adventure; which I commit to your se-
 crecy, and subscribe myself *your most*
humble servant,

POLYDORE.

LETTER XVI.

ROSAMOND TO HENRY II.

READ o’er these lines, the records of my
 shame,
 If thou can’st suffer yet my hateful name;
 Clean as this spotless page, till stain’d by me,
 Such was my conscience, till seduc’d by thee:
 Chaste were my thoughts, and all serene
 within,
 Till mark’d by thee with characters of sin.
 Had some successful lover, in the prime,
 Of equal years, betray’d me to a crime,
 Refrless love had been my best defence,
 And gain’d compassion for the soft offence:
 But while thy wither’d age had no such
 charms,
 To tempt a blooming virgin to thy arms,
 I’m justly thought a prostitute for gold,
 A mercenary thing to sordid int’rest sold.

Be curs’d that female fiend, whose prac-
 tis’d art,
 With wanton tales, seduc’d my guiltless
 heart;
 Let her with endless infamy be curs’d;
 Of all the agents hell employs, the worst:
 Perdition to herself the wretch insur’d,
 When she my youthful modesty allur’d;

Oh, fatal day! when to my virtue’s wrong,
 I fondly listen’d to her flatt’ring tongue!
 But, oh! more fatal moment, when she
 gain’d
 That vile consent which all my virtue stain’d!
 Yet Heav’n can tell, with what extreme re-
 gret
 The fury of thy lawless flames I met;
 For, unexperienc’d in the ways of sin,
 A conscious honour struggled still within.
 Oh, could I! but the ill-tim’d wish is
 vain,
 Could I my former innocence regain!
 Thy proffer’d kingdom, Henry, were a prize,
 Which, balanc’d with that wealth, I should
 despise.
 But I no more my sex’s pride can boast:
 Alas! what has one moment’s madness cost!

Not Woodstock’s charming bow’rs can ease
 my grief;
 For I must fly myself to find relief:
 Oft, while the sun in length’ning shades de-
 clines,
 And thro’ the waving trees more mildly
 shines;

Alone

Alone thro' all the beauteous walks I rove,
And hope the sweets of solitude to prove:
But, at my sight, each verdant prospect
wears

A gloomy view, and ev'ry plant appears
To bend it's top, o'ercharg'd with dewy
tears;

Methinks each painted blossom hangs it's
head,

Avoids my touch, and withers where I tread.

If angling near a crystal brook I stand,

And with deluding skill the bait command;

The cautious fish that fly the snare, upbraid

My heedless youth, more easily betray'd.

Amidst the garden wrought by curious hands,

A noble statue of Diana stands;

Naked she stands, with just proportions
grac'd,

And bathing in a silver fountain plac'd:

When near the flow'ry borders I advance,

At me she seems to dart an angry glance.

What scenes, alas, can please a guilty mind!

What joy can I in these recesses find,

For lawless and forbidden love design'd!

In some obscure and melancholy cell,

Rather a weeping penitent I'd dwell,

Than here a glorious prostitute remain,

To all my sex's modesty a stain.

This stately lab'rinth, rais'd with vast ex-
pence,

Displays my shame, in it's magnificence:

As through the stately rooms I lately
walk'd,

And with my woman of it's paintings talk'd,

She spy'd the draught of Tarquin's wan-
ton flame,

And, heedless, ask'd the injur'd beauty's
name:

This, I reply'd, is that illustrious dame—

Renown'd for chastity, I should have said;
But here, a rising blush my face o'erspread;
Confus'd, I stopp'd, and left th' inquiring
maid.

Lucretia's story on my life had cast

A black reproach, who yet can live disgrac'd:

I should, like her, with just resentment prest,

Have plung'd the fatal dagger to my breast.

What specious colours can disguise my sin,

Or still the restless monitor within?

Thy greatness, Henry, but augments my
shame,

And adds immortal scandal to my name;

My odious name, which, as the worst dis-
grace,

The Cliffords cancel from their noble race.

To what propitious refuge shall I run,

The terrors of a guilty mind to shun?

In vain the sun it's morning pride displays;

I turn my eyes, and sicken at it's rays:

The silver moon, and sparkling stars by night,

Torment me too with their officious light:

The glimm'ring tapers round my chamber

plac'd,

Across the room fantastick shadows cast;

Of all my dreams the melancholy scene

Presents an injur'd, a revengeful Queen.

Last night, when sleep my heavy eyes had
clos'd,

To all her rage, methought, I stood expos'd!

Wild were her looks, a poison'd cup she
brought,

And proudly offer'd me the fatal draught;

The destin'd bowl I took with trembling
hands,

Compell'd to execute her fierce commands:

This dismal omen aggravates my fears,

Before my fancy still the furious Queen ap-
pears.

LETTER XVII.

MARY QUEEN OF FRANCE, TO CHARLES BRANDON DUKE OF SUFFOLK.

THE PRINCESS MARY, HENRY THE EIGHTH'S YOUNGER SISTER, BEING
IN LOVE WITH THE DUKE OF SUFFOLK, WAS, FOR PUBLICK REASONS,
MARRIED TO LEWIS XII. OF FRANCE, WHO DIED IN SIX MONTHS AFTER.
THE QUEEN BEING AGAIN AT LIBERTY, WRITES THE FOLLOWING
EPISTLE TO THE DUKE OF SUFFOLK, HER FIRST LOVER.

AN IMITATION OF DRAYTON'S EPISTLE.

LET these soft lines my kindest thoughts
convey,

And tell thee what I suffer by thy stay.

Did seas divide us, this might well excuse

Thy negligence, and my fond heart abuse;

But Calais from the Kentish strand is seen,

A gentle current only rolls between.

Nor needs my Suffolk, like Leander, brave

A threat'ning death in ev'ry breaking wave,

When, guided only by a glimm'ring light,

He cross'd the stormy Hellespont each night:

Tall ships with flying sails, and lab'ring oars;

Attend to land thee on the Gallick shore:

But thou art chang'd! that ardour is expir'd,

Which once thy wishes with impatience fir'd,

When Savoy's blooming duchess strove in

vain

From me the conquest of thy heart to gain:

T Invited

Invited by great Henry's martial fame,
 The haughty princess, with her brother, came
 To compliment the King for Tournay gain'd;
 Where, in a rich pavilion, entertain'd,
 Thy noble form th' unguarded fair surpriz'd;
 Nor were her tender wishes long disguis'd:
 Whatever flatt'ry, love, or wanton art
 Could do, she practis'd to seduce thy heart.
 Great Antony, by such allurements gain'd,
 For Cleopatra, all his glory stain'd:
 But thy firm faith no injury receiv'd,
 For you were just, or I was well deceiv'd.
 Nor were my virgin vows less true to thee,
 When young Castile address'd the court for me;

The charms of proffer'd empire I resign'd,
 And all that could ambition move, declin'd;

A softer passion had possess'd my mind:
 And while unrivall'd in thy breast I reign'd,
 My thoughts the lustre of a crown disdain'd.
 But, ah! what changes human joys attend!
 On airy chance our brightest hopes depend:
 Victorious Henry's arms still meet success;
 The vanquish'd Gauls at last propose a peace:
 By Wolsey's policy their terms succeed,
 And both the hostile nations are agreed,
 While I the publick victim am decreed.
 Condemn'd to share the Christian Monarch's bed,

And curs'd with that magnificence I fled.
 I know my rank no private choice allow'd,
 And what a Princess to her country ow'd.
 These splendid maxims should have sway'd
 my breast,

But love intirely had my soul possess'd.
 How oft I wish'd my humble lot had been
 Beneath the glorious hazard of a Queen!
 That crown'd by rural maids with painted
 flow'rs,

I rang'd the fields, and slept in verdant
 bow'rs!

Belov'd of some young swain with Brandon's
 face,

His voice, his gesture, and his blooming
 grace!

In all but birth and state resembling thee!
 Then unmolested had we liv'd, and free
 From those unhappy turns which greatness
 brings;

While rocks and meadows, shades, and pur-
 ling springs,

The flow'ry valley, and the gloomy grove,
 Had heard of no superior name to love.

Such scenes of this inglorious life I drew,
 And half believ'd the charming fiction true,
 'Till real ills dissolv'd the pleasing dreams;
 The groves and valleys fled, the lawns and
 silver streams,

The gay fantastick paradise I mourn'd,
 While courts and factions, crowns and cares
 return'd.

With sighs I still recall the fatal day,
 When no pretence could gain a longer stay.

The lovely Queen my parting sorrow saw,
 Nor Henry's presence kept my grief in awe:
 No rules of decent custom could controul,
 Or hide the wild disorder of my soul;
 When shipp'd for France before the dancing
 wind

The navy fled, and left my hopes behind.
 With weeping eyes I still survey'd the strand,
 Where on a rising cliff I saw thee stand;
 Nor once from thence my steadfast fight with-
 drew,

'Till the lov'd object was no more in view.
 'Farewel,' I cry'd, 'dear charming youth;
 'with thee

'Each chearful prospect vanishes from me.'

Loud shouts and triumphs on the Gallick
 coast

Salute me, but the noisy zeal was lost;
 Nor shouts nor triumphs forc'd my least regard,
 Thy parting sighs, methought, was all I
 heard.

But now, at Abbeville by Lewis met,
 I strove the thoughts of Suffolk to forget:
 For here my faith was to a monarch vow'd,
 And solemn rites my passion disallow'd:
 However pure my former flames had been,
 Unblemish'd honour made them now a sin.
 But scarce my virtue had the conquest gain'd,
 And every wild forbidden wish restrain'd,
 When at St. Dennis, with imperial state
 Invested, on the Gallick throne I sat;
 The day with noble tournaments was grac'd,
 Your name among the British champions
 plac'd.

Invited by a guilty thirst of fame,
 Without regard for my repose you came.
 The lists I saw thee ent'ring with surprize,
 And felt the dazzling glances of thine eyes.

'Ye sacred pow'rs,' I cry'd 'that rule
 'above!

'Defend my breast from this perfidious love.—

'Ye holy lamps! before whose awful lights

'I gave my hand;—and, ye religious rites!

'Assist me too; nor let a thought unchaste,

'Or guilty wish, my plighted honour blast:'

While passion struggling with my pious fears,

Forc'd from my eyes involuntary tears.

Some tender blossom thus, with leaves en-
 larg'd,

Declines it's head, with midnight dew o'er-
 charg'd:

The passing breezes shake the gentle flow'r,
 And scatter all around a pearly show'r.

From this distracting hour I shunn'd thy sight,
 And gain'd the conquest by a prudent flight:

But human turns and sov'reign destiny
 Have set me now from these engagements
 free.

The stars, propitious to my virgin love,
 My first desires and early vows approve,

While busy politicians urge in vain,

That publick reasons should my choice re-
 strain;

That

That none but York's or Lancaster's high
race.

Or great Plantagenet's, I ought to grace:
Nor Suffolk wants a long illustrious line,
And worth, that shall in future records shine.
They own'd thy valour, when thy conqu'ring
lance

Carry'd the prize from all the youth of
France.

Thy merit Henry's constant favour shows,
And envy only can my choice oppose.

Thy noble presence, wit, and fine address,
The British and the Gallick court confess.

Alençon's shape, and Vendôme's sparkling
eye,

Count Paul's gay mien, and Bourbon's
majesty,

No longer are admir'd when thou art by.
There nothing wants to justify my flame,
The statemen grant but a poor empty name.

And what's the gaudy title of a King?
What sort of bliss can royal grandeur bring?

When thou art absent, what's the court to me,
But tiresome state, and dull formality?

This toy, a crown, I would resign, to prove
The peaceful joys of innocence and love.

LETTER XVIII.

PENELOPE TO ULYSSES.

FROM OVID.

DISTRACTED with his stay, yet still
the same,

True to her antient vows, and early flame,
Penelope salutes her absent King:

Oh! would himself at last an answer bring!

Proud Troy is fall'n, or Grecian virgins hate:

Yet not th' unrivall'd riches of her state,

Nor all the glories of her monarch's throne,

Can, for the pains thy absence gives, atone.

Oh! had the waves, that gently wafted o'er

The lustful Phrygian to the Spartan shore,

Plung'd in the deep the guilty load they }
bore!

Abandon'd then I should not waste away,

In unavailing moans, the lazy day;

Or, lost to joy, and widow'd of delight,

Curse the dull lagging hours of the more te-
dious night.

Fruitful of doubts, my love still fear'd for you

Dangers unknown, and greater than the true;

I thought all Troy conspir'd against thy head,

And Hector's name, but mention'd, struck
me dead.

Trembling I heard of false Achilles slain,

And wept to find the bold deceit was vain.

Tlepolemus fell by the Lycian spear,

Tlepolemus renew'd my anxious care.

In short, at every Grecian hero's fall,

Thro' the long war before the fatal wall,

A thrilling coldness ran thro' every part,

Chill'd up my blood, and shudder'd at my
heart.

But my chaste passion mov'd the pitying skies;

My lord is safe, and Troy in ashes lies.

With prosperous gales the Argive chiefs re-
turn,

And to their country Gods Barbarick incense
burn.

The wives in pious gifts declare their joy,

While their sav'd husbands tell the fate of
Troy:

Old men and frighted virgins, fix'd around,

In dumb amazement dwell upon the sound:

The soldiers in gay feasts their cares compose
And mark in wine the scenes of antient woes:

This is Sigæum, here swift Simois flow'd,

There high erect old Priam's palace stood;

Here fierce Pelides urg'd the dreadful war,

There fix'd the bleeding Hector to his car:

There mov'd Ulysses, certain of success,

Greater his conduct, nor his courage less:

'Twas Nestor told us all: he told us too

The arts that Dolon and the Thracian flew.

Heedless and too forgetful as you were,

In you I'm sure 'twas criminal to dare:

When you but for one faithful friend alone

Dealt fate to squadrons, and provok'd your own,

How well your wife and infant left behind,

How well your tender passion fill'd your mind!

I fainted as I heard the dreadful tale;

Scarce your success could o'er my fears prevail.

But what's success, what's ruin'd Troy to me,

Or all the savage joys of victory?

If still unblest, I sink beneath my pain,

And never must enjoy my lord again!

For other wives destroy'd, to me still stands

The wall erected by immortal hands.

Now plenteous harvests grow where Ilium stood,

The soil well fatten'd with the natives blood.

O'er ruin'd palaces that reach'd the skies,

Low spires of grass, and humble shrubs, arise.

Still of the conqueror's absence I complain,

Nor know what distant worlds my wand'ring
lord detain.

Ulysses I of every ship require,

The sailors with repeated questions tire:

Hopeless and half-despairing, yet I write;

The cruel pow'rs, that envy my delight, }
May bring at least my letters to your sight.

To Pylos, antient Nestor's fruitful reign,

And Sparta's injur'd court, I sent in vain;

For nor from Sparta, nor from Pylos came,

Aught save wild rumours, and uncertain fame.

Again I wish Troy's lofty tow'rs might rise,

And curse the thoughtless vows that gain'd
the skies.

War's hazards then would be my only care,
 And I in common with a thousand fear :
 Now all the dangers of the land and seas
 Are present to my thoughts, and banish ease :
 While you, alas ! perhaps with pleasure rove,
 And faithless nourish a forbidden love ;
 Take some deluding harlot to your breast,
 And in her arms with lawless transports }
 blest,
 Make my dull easy constancy your jest.
 Ye pow'rs ! avert the thought I cannot bear,
 And give my vain suspicions to the air.
 Whate'er may be the reasons of thy stay,
 Oh ! may'st thou never willingly delay !
 Me to a second choice my fire invites,
 Chides my delays, and urges all his rights.
 Still let him urge, my love my faith assures ;
 I am, I must, I will be, ever yours.
 Yet my warm pray'rs the good old monarch
 move,
 He views my tears, and mourns my hapless
 love,
 But a vile train of thoughtless youths proclaim
 With lawless impudence, a saucy flame.
 Hither from Zante and Samos they resort,
 And revel unmolested in thy court.
 Treasures, the purchase of thy blood, they
 seize,
 Those spoils Eurymachus, Pisander these :
 Antinous here with equal rage possessest,
 There greedy Polybus, a constant guest, }
 Plunder around—And need I name the rest,

Who in your absence on our vitals prey,
 And waste in costly luxury the day ?
 The beggar Irus, a detested name,
 And base Melanthus last, complete thy shame.
 'Gainst these insults what force can I employ ?
 What thy old father, or thy tender boy ?
 For his dear life a thousand snares are laid,
 And certain ruin aim'd at his unguarded
 head.
 Preserve him, Heav'n ! and if we ne'er must
 join,
 Yet may he live to close your eyes and mine.
 In vain Laertes does his pow'r oppose,
 Unfit for war, against surrounding foes.
 Telemachus will soon to fame aspire,
 Now his soft years a parent's aid require.
 Oh ! thou, our only hope and refuge, come,
 Dispel our dangers, and avert our doom ;
 Form the young hero in the arts of war,
 To rival thee, but with more caution dare.
 Hasten, and relieve your fire with years op-
 prest :
 Once more he longs to clasp you to his
 breast,
 Then shake off tedious life, and sink to rest.
 Oh ! hasten to me !—A little longer stay
 Will ev'ry grace, each fancy'd charm decay :
 Increasing cares, and time's resistless rage,
 Will waste my bloom, and wither it to age ;
 Yet at thy sight wild joys, and sprightly love,
 Shall dying youth recal, and ev'ry charm
 improve.

SIX LETTERS

FROM

LAURA TO AURELIA.

LETTER I.

FROM LAURA, GIVING AN ACCOUNT OF HER BROTHER'S CRIMINAL AMOUR, AND HER OWN PASSION FOR THE HANDSOME HERMIT.

COULD your importunity have prevailed with my brother to have left me in London, you had been free from the vexation that I shall certainly give you, by making you the confident of all my country adventures: and I hope you will relieve my chagrin, by telling me what the dear, bewitching, busy world is doing, while I am idly fauntering away my time in rural shades. How happy are you, my dear Aurelia! How I envy you the enjoyment of dust, of crowds and noise, with all the polite hurry of the *Beau-Monde*!

My brother brought me hither to see a country seat he has lately purchased: he would fain persuade me it is finely situated; but I should think it more finely situated in the Mall, or even in Cheap-side, than here. Indeed, I hardly know where we are, only that it is at a dreadful distance from the theatre-royal in Drury Lane, from the opera, from the masquerade, and every thing in this world that is worth living for.

I can scarce tell you whither to direct your letters; we are certainly at the ends of the earth, on the borders of the continent, the limits of the habitable globe, under the polar star, among wild people and savages. I thought we should never

have come to the end of our pilgrimage; nor could I forbear asking my brother, if we were to travel by dry land to the Antipodes; not a mile but seemed ten, that carried me from London, the centre of all my joys.

The country is my aversion; I hate trees and hedges, steep hills, and silent valleys: the satyrists may laugh, but to me,

Green fields, and shady groves, and crystal
springs,
And larks, and nightingales, are odious
things.

I had rather hear London cries, with the rattle of coaches, than sit listening to the melancholy murmur of purling brooks, or all the wild musick of the woods; the smell of violets gives me the hystericks; fresh air murders me; my constitution is not robust enough to bear it; the cooling zephyrs will fan me into a catarrh, if I stay here much longer.

If these are the seats of the Muses, let them unenvied enjoy their glittering whimsies, and converse with the visionary beings of their own forming. I have no fancy for Dryades and Fairies, nor the least prejudice to human society; a mere earthly beau, with an embroidered coat,
suits

suits my taste better than an ærial lover with his shining tresses, and rainbow wings.

The sober twilight, which has employed so many soft descriptions, is with me a very dull period; nor does the moon, on which the poets doat, with all her starry train, delight me half so much as an assembly-room illuminated with wax-candles: this is what I should prefer to the glaring sun in his meridian splendour: day-light makes me sick; it has something in it so common and vulgar, that it seems fitter for peasants to make hay in, or country lasses to spin by, than for the use of people of distinction.

You pity me, I know, dear Aurelia, in this deplorable state; the whole creation is a blank to me, it is all joyless and desolate. In whatever gay images the Muses have dressed these rustick abodes, I have not penetration enough to discover them: not the flowery field, nor spangled sky, the rosy morn, or balmy evening, can recreate my thoughts: I am neither a religious nor poetical enthusiast, and without either of these qualifications, what should I do in silent retreats and pensive shades?

I find myself little at ease in this absence of the noisy diversions of the town; it is hard for me to keep up my spirits in leisure and retirement; it makes me anxiously inquisitive, what will become of me when my breath flies away: death, that ghastly phantom, perpetually intrudes on my solitude, and in some doleful knell, from a neighbouring steeple, often calls upon me to ruminate on coffins and funerals, graves, and gloomy sepulchres: these dismal subjects put me in the vapours, and make me start at my own shadow; nor have I acquired any great degree of fortitude by turning free-thinker, and unlearning

All that the nurse and all the priest have taught.

MR. POPE.

You have been too often of our party, not to know my brother is a very infidel: he has a sort of vanity in making me a profelyte, and freeing my mind from those prejudices, as he calls them, and superstitious notions, which govern a great part of the world; but as he finds me a little unwilling to resign my immortality, he has furnished me with a system of transmigration, and the eternal wandering of the soul from one species of being to another.

However, I do not find myself a gainer

by renouncing my creed, which allowed me to hope, that after the period of this mortal life, I might be an angel, or at least equal to those bright essences.

But by this fantastick scheme, to which my brother is making me a convert, my pretensions are sunk; the utmost I can expect, when I have shifted my present existence, is to grin in a monkey, or look demure in a broad-fac'd owl, or to sit a chattering magpye in a bush; it is a chance among which of the animal race I am to be numbered; whether I shall mount the air with the winged inhabitants, or crawl on the earth among my brother reptiles, or graze in the meadows with the horned tribe. Indeed, I have no great stomach to grafs or hay, and as little inclination to sleep in a den, or stretch my hairy bulk on the dewy plain: but it is yet uncertain, whether I am to stalk, or fly, or swim; I am still at a loss which of these various clans to greet as my next kindred.

However, I am better pleased with being what I am, than any thing else; I had rather be a celebrated toast, fluttering at a ball among beaux and pretty fellows, than the most gaudy butterfly hovering with painted wings over a bed of tulips: if this should be my ensuing fate, it will be a mortifying descent from a goddess to an insect.

And really there is something so gloomy and uncomfortable in these prospects of futurity, that if I consider them much longer, I shall turn Christian again, in defiance of my brother, and a learned unbeliever his companion, who are perpetually ridiculing my concern about a visionary hereafter, as they term it.

Indeed, this would be the least of my cares, were I not extremely at leisure; but as I am, it is impossible for me to avoid being solicitous what fate attends me, when I resign this transitory life: for I must certainly die; I am mortal beyond contradiction; this truth sits heavy on my soul; there is no flying it's evidence, nor does this place afford any amusement to divert the gloomy reflection. If I should turn devotee, you would think it a more wonderful metamorphosis than any I have named: but in all changes I am constantly *yours*, &c.

LAURA.

P. S. I have a secret to tell you concerning my brother, which you shall know in my next letter; for I am as impatient to discover it, as you can be to hear it.

LETTER

LETTER II.

TO AURELIA.

I Have too much confidence in my dear Aurelia, to conceal any thing from her; nor can it be any injury to my brother to trust you with his character, and know him to be as great a libertine in his practice as his principles.

But in whatever freedoms he has indulged himself, I must own he has always endeavoured to give me a just sense of honour, and the decorum due to my sex; while he has taken pains to free me from the restraints of religion, he has left nothing unsaid on other motives, that might raise in me the tenderest concern for a clear reputation: which made me the more resent his scandalous conduct, when I found he had a mistress in his house, whom he had sent hither two or three days before we came: I knew not what to do, nor how to behave myself in this exigence, till I found she was rather an object of compassion than reproach, and that she came hither, not to indulge an infamous amour, but to shelter herself from want, and the resentment of her relations.

She told me the story of her misfortune, as well as the distress and confusion she was in would permit; and asking me a thousand pardons, ingenuously owned she had engaged my brother to bring me with him, or not to follow her.

I found her education had been strictly modest, and that she was unacquainted with the vicious part of the world. She is hardly sixteen, her name Charlotte, the only child of a noted citizen, who was utterly ruined in his affairs by a crafty Jew; from the height of credit, the unhappy man found himself sunk into circumstances of disgrace and indigence.

This was a melancholy turn to Charlotte, just in the vanity of youthful expectations to find herself, from the affluence of fortune, so suddenly reduced to poverty and contempt. My brother, whom she had sometimes seen with her father, but knew nothing of his character, took this unfortunate crisis to tempt her with rich presents, and fair promises, to leave her friends to retire to some private lodgings he had got for her.

In this distraction of affairs, her father being under an arrest, and all his effects seized, she was surprized into a compliance with my brother's proposal; nor did he give her time to reflect, or consult any of her relations, who soon got intelligence of this dishonour, and sent her a severe injunction to see their faces no more.

This cruel message, with the sad tidings of her mother's death, that followed, and the full evidence that she was deluded by my brother with feigned promises of marriage, had almost proved fatal to her life; nor could any argument allay her sorrow, till her distressed lover engaged never to ask any future favour of her, but what the nicest virtue may grant. On this condition, she consented to go to his new seat in the country; for indeed she had no other refuge. He has kept his promise; she lodges in my apartment, and is treated by him with as much decency as if she was his sister.

I never thought such a libertine would turn Platonick; it is an unusual refinement, and, I believe, the first gallantry of this kind he ever practised: but he has an esteem, a tenderness for her; of which, by his dissolute manners, I always fancied him incapable.

Her behaviour is really modest; nor was there ever a more natural impression of truth and innocence, than appears in her face: her too credulous temper, and unexperienced years, have betrayed her into this state of shame and misery; of which (though too late) she seems exquisitely sensible. Since I began this letter, she came into my closet, and, with a flood of tears, begged me to contrive some way to free her from this dangerous place.

'But whither,' she said, 'can I fly? My friends will never receive me; nor have I the confidence to meet their reproaches: my crime has sent a tender mother weeping to her grave; it loads my father's hoary head with a heavier weight of sorrow than all his other misfortunes. Love was not my excuse, I am yet a stranger to that passion; it was a cowardice, it was fear
' of

' of poverty, a criminal distrust of celestial Providence: I should have begged, I should have starved, rather than have parted with my innocence on such mercenary terms. However sincere my repentance is, it can signify nothing, with regard to the world; the scandal will never be obliterated; I must either face the publick contempt, or waste my days in a joyless obscurity. Put my condition in the best light: would this false man, as he promised, marry me, what opprobrious language, what terms of infamy, must I expect,

' in his intervals of chagrin! Besides this, the impiety of his conversation terrifies me, while I hear him make a jest of those sacred subjects, for which I have been taught the highest veneration. I should live happier with a wild American.'

I made her no reply; the reasoning was too just to admit a contradiction; but this melancholy instance makes me more than ever resolved not to surrender, nor even capitulate on any other terms, but those of a lawful English wife. Adieu.

LAURA,

LETTER III.

TO AURELIA.

WHAT mutable things we are! You will be surprized to hear I am grown fond of the country, and have acquired a relish for it's harmless delights: I can talk to an echo, or listen with great attention to a purling stream; I am in a fair way to make garlands, invoke the Muses, and write pastorals. Since you heard last from me, I have met with an agreeable adventure, that has given a sort of romantick turn to my imagination.

As I was taking my constant diversion of riding on the downs, the evening being exceeding pleasant, I wandered some miles beyond my usual limits, 'till I came in sight of a venerable pile of building, which could be distinguished from a church by nothing but the want of a steeple; every thing about it had an air of grandeur and antiquity. At some distance from the house there was a thick wood, with several fine walks cut through it.

I had a great inclination to ramble in those agreeable shades; and alighting, ordered my footman to wait at the place where I left him. It was not long before I came to the centre of the forest, in which was a large grass-plat of a circular figure, with a double row of high elms growing in the same form round it: in the middle of the green was a little mount, that, by easy steps of turf, had a winding ascent to the top, where stood an arbour of jessamine, woodbine, and roses, twisted together with a sort of elegant disorder; the gaudy blossoms

pleased the sight, while their mingled sweets perfumed the ambient air. On the lower branches of the circling elms hung several gilt cages, with a variety of singing birds in them, which were now chanting their evening songs, while a musical flagelet, in clear and shrill responses, answered from the delicious arbour.

I began to think there were indeed such things as enchanted forests, and vocal groves, or that the great Spirit of nature was solacing itself in those innocent abodes; however, female curiosity led me on, 'till I came to the charming bower, where I found a well-dressed beautiful youth, of about seventeen, sitting with a flagelet in his hand: his complexion was a lively brunette, that disgraced the lily and the roses; his dark hair fell in large graceful curls below his neck; nothing could be more elegant than his shape and features; nor was there any meeting the splendour of his eyes, without being sensible of every darting glance.

I made some apology for my intrusion, which he answered with an easy natural civility; nor could I perceive that my presence gave him the least surprize or confusion: he received me with perfect composure, nor seemed to have any manner of curiosity to know whence I came, or whither I was going; nor (to my great mortification) did he ask whether I was a mortal or a goddess.

It gave me some uneasiness, I confess, to find myself no more an object of surprize,

prize, to one who, perhaps, had never seen any thing so fine in this life; for I was in a very rich habit, blazing with scarlet and gold. You cannot imagine how it humbled my vanity, to observe with what indolence and tranquillity the young insensible looked at me; and the more, because he did not seem to want wit or politeness. I was extremely vexed that at three-and-twenty he should treat me with as much indifference and respect, as if I had been his great-grandmother.

This sedateness gave me a curiosity to pry into his studies; for I saw two books lie near the place where he sat: when I opened them, I found one was, *A Discourse of the Government of the Passions*; the other, *A Treatise of the Immortality of the Soul*. I had nothing to say on those grave subjects, but, after some formal discourse of the fine situation of the place, I took my leave of it; the young philosopher attending me to the limits of the wood, where I left my servant; and there we parted, without any seeming reluctance on either side.

But I own I had a restless curiosity to know the history of this lovely youth, and to whom the house belonged; nor was it long before I received satisfaction from a clergyman, that was riding the same road with me: he said—‘The

‘man of merit, and well acquainted
‘with the world, at which he was now
‘unreasonably disgusted, and grown solitary, on the account of the death of
‘his eldest son, to whom he had given
‘a very liberal education, and with a
‘generous allowance sent him into
‘Italy, where his time was spent in the
‘most dissolute manner; till being unhappily engaged with a lewd woman,
‘in a fit of jealousy he shot himself
‘through the head. This tragical
‘event made Sir Harry resolve to give
‘his younger son a quite different education: indeed his character is entirely the reverse of his elder brother’s;
‘he is remarkable for his early piety,
‘and great proficiency in all sorts of
‘learning, having a very polite and ingenious person for his tutor: but Philocles (that is the younger gentleman’s name) has too great an allay of gravity for his early years, and is of so retired a temper, that he is known by the title of *The Handsome Hermit*, as he is indeed very handsome.’

Here the clergyman left me, overjoyed with this intelligence. As soon as I got home, I related my adventure to Charlotte, who gave me but little attention; being, as I told you, in the utmost anxiety, at the manner of life to which she was confined. I am, dear Aurelia, most
sincerely yours, &c. LAURA.

LETTER IV.

TO AURELIA.

SINCE you received my last letter, I have taken another ramble in Sir Harry Lizzard’s forest. My brother knows nothing of this adventure; and the first afternoon that I found him engaged, I persuaded Charlotte to go with me; who was glad of any pretence to fly from her own gallant, though she expressed but little curiosity to see mine.

At the entrance of the grove we left the servants to wait with our horses till we returned. In my first visit, I perceived, by Philocles’s discourse, that when the evening was fair, he constantly spent it in the charming bower, where we now found him reading Dr. YOUNG’s *True Estimate of Human Life*, with such attention, he did not immediately see us, and seemed surprized at the encounter.

It diverted me, to find his philosophy

discomposed; I began to flatter myself, it was the effect of my charms: the hopes of such a conquest delighted me more than all my past victories; it gave a sudden vivacity to my thoughts, and resolving, by my wit, to secure the conquest of my eyes, I began, with great gaiety, to rally him on his recluse manner of life, and losing his gayest hours in a joyless solitude.

By this time the young Stoick had assumed his natural superiority; and instead of replying, as I expected, in a gallant and modish strain, he talked to me of the satisfactions of virtue, the tranquillity of the mind in the rectitude of its passions; themes which, from another person, would have composed me better than a dose of *laudanum*. B here,

—The grave rebuke,
Severe in youthful beauty, added grace
Invincible—

Like the fallen angel in Milton,

—Abash'd I stood,
And felt how awful goodness is, and saw
Virtue how lovely in her native shape!

The glory that darted from his eyes, the agreeable accent, the moving eloquence that flowed from those rosy lips, commanded my whole attention; had he preached a sermon, I could patiently have listened to the blooming orator,

—From morn to noon,
From noon to dewy eve, a summer's day.
MILTON.

And yet I could not forbear, sometimes, laughing at his gravity, and begging he would put himself into holy orders; but he was not to be rallied out of his sobriety; nor could I possibly draw from him that flattery, with which, 'till now, I had been addressed; he seemed rather to have an inclination to humble my vanity.

Charlotte, the whole time, sat in a pensive silence, while the tears, which she strove to conceal, would sometimes drop from her eyes. Philocles, in every pause of conversation, surveyed her with looks that expressed great humanity; but I was in no disposition to be jealous of any thing I looked on so inferior to myself.

However, my concern to conceal this affair from my brother, made me break off the conversation a little abruptly, that we might be at home at the usual hour. As soon as ever we were got alone, I asked Charlotte how she liked *The handsome Hermit*. 'Oh,' said she, with a tender emotion, 'that I had never seen him! 'Till now I was not sensible of the injury this barbarian your brother has done me; he has cut me off from all the lawful joys of life, from the pleasure of a reciprocal affection for a man of worth and virtue: with my innocence I lost a right to that happiness. What! am I a prostitute! a kept mistress! Your brother's—! O infamy! Your brother's wh—e!'

'If you had not been that,' said I, 'Charlotte, you had been a beggar.'

'O envied title!' she replied, 'O glorious Poverty! thou hast been the choice of saints and heroes; virtue has made thee her sanctuary, her peaceful retreat. I could have fed on whole-

'some vegetables, quenched my thirst at some chrystal brook, indulged my harmless slumbers on the verdant turf, undisturbed with guilty fears. Pardon me,' said she, recollecting herself, 'these passionate sallies; I find myself more than ever undone, condemned to waste my hours in sullen obscurity; in the pride of life, the bloom of soft desires, to languish in solitary despair! My conscience will not suffer me to gratify an unlawful passion; nor should any advantage, were my guilt a secret, persuade me to impose on a man of worth. I have been true even to this rake that has undone me, and frustrated all my hopes of a lawful happiness.'

'That is, my brother has spoiled your marriage,' said I: 'but, dear Charlotte, why should that thought afflict you, who intend to pass your future time in penitence and retirement? Has *The handsome Hermit* altered your pious resolutions?'

'No,' she replied, 'he has rather confirmed them: never had the cause of virtue a more resolute advocate; methinks I see the beauty that lightened in his face; I hear the charming accent still; I felt the energy of his arguments; my soul gave it's full assent to the celestial dictates: I wondered you could so often interrupt the graceful orator with your ill-timed raillery; I could have listened to his lecture of morality, 'till the midnight dews had fallen, 'till all the stars had set.'

'Dear Charlotte,' said I, 'forgive this interruption; I find you are in love: my intention is entirely frustrated of having your picture drawn as the Fair Penitent, with a lamp and prayer-book before you; I perceive you design yet to converse among sinful mortals. Will you go with me tomorrow, to hear another lecture from the charming divine?'

'Rather,' she replied, 'let me retire to the silent grave, to conceal my infamy: I would not deceive him with an air of innocence, while I am conscious of my own dishonour. I know myself; this is the crisis of my misery; nothing can obliterate this secret sense of shame; I may retire from the public view, as it is my full resolution; but what is a resolution at sixteen? Without peculiar assistance from Heaven, I shall never conquer the dictates of love and nature; in this perplexity, I must

' I must either marry some worthless
' wretch that knows my infamy, or de-
' ceive some man of merit, to whom it
' is a secret.'

Here she burst into a flood of tears,
intreating me to write to an uncle she

had, to receive her into his favour, and
let her live privately in his family. This
I promised; nor despair of prevailing.
My concern for her makes me forget it
is time to subscribe myself *your humble*
servant,

LAURA.

LETTER V.

TO THE SAME.

CHARLOTTE, to her great satis-
faction, has this morning left us,
and is gone to her uncle, who was easily
persuaded to receive her, after he was
assured of the sincerity of her penitence:
but I found it a harder task to prevail
with my brother to resign the idol of his
affections; though he lost nothing by
her absence, but the pleasure of gazing
on her.

I am in pain 'till you know the sequel
of my adventure with Philocles, who,
since I writ last, has several times, by
appointment, met me in the delicious
bower; but still, to my great vexation,
he appeared insensible of any tender im-
pression: I could discern nothing in his
conversation, but a pious design to con-
vert me to Christianity, and convince me
of the folly of the new scheme, to which
my brother had made me a proselyte.

But the last time we met, I observed
a soft confusion in his looks; 'till after a
long pause, (which I had no mind to in-
terrupt) 'I am going,' said he, 'to set
' myself in a very ridiculous light to one
' of your character: but I am content
' to pass for an enthusiast, 'till the event
' convinces you of the truth of what I
' shall relate.

' If a domestick tradition may be
' credited, there has no person died out
' of our family, but what has had a warn-
' ing of their approaching fate, by hear-
' ing musick passing through the house
' in the dead silence of the night, which
' is heard by none but the person con-
' cerned: my mother and sister both
' foretold their own death from this pre-
' sage. I see you smile,' continued Phi-
locles, 'but I have had the same warn-
' ing, and am superstitious enough to
' credit it. Last night some trifling dis-
' order kept me waking; my thoughts,
' however, were placid and serene; some
' verses, I had heard my sister repeat in
' her last sickness, came fresh into my
' memory—

While night in solemn triumph reigns,
Ascend, my soul, the heav'nly plains;
Thy flight to those gay regions take:
Angels and God are still awake.
The smiling stars will light thy way
To the gladsome realms of day.
While drowsy men with idle themes,
Fantastick joys, and airy dreams,
Are entertain'd; do thou converse
With Heav'n, and heav'nly strains rehearse;
Visit the peaceful climes above,
And through the fields of pleasure rove;
Forget the scenes of care and strife,
And walk among the trees of life:
Taste the rich fruits of Paradise,
And bathe in flowing streams of bliss:
Solac'd in those eternal springs,
Lose ev'ry thought of mortal things.

' Just as I had repeated these verses,
' I was serenaded by an invisible musi-
' cian, with the sweetest strains that ever
' delighted mortal ears: the harmonious
' echo seemed to pass from room to
' room, 'till it came into my chamber;
' where, after a short space, it sunk away
' in a gentle cadence.

' I knew my obsequies were now
' sung, and heard the fatal summons
' without surprize: death was a theme
' familiar to my thoughts, as I neither
' expected or desired to reach the decline
' of life.'

I listened to this story as to a fairy
tale, or a sort of waking dream. As
gravely as he told it, I could not forbear
laughing.

' This, Madam,' said he, 'is what I
' expected; but it will not make me
' less serious on a subject of such import-
' ance. You have often rallied me on
' a manner of life so unsuitable to my
' years; perhaps it may be more the ef-
' fect of reason than inclination. My
' brother's tragical end convinced me of
' the fatal effects of love, and made me
' resolve never to admit that distracting
' passion to my breast: but, whatever
' opposition I have made, my heart has

‘not been insensible of your charms, nor with all my philosophy sufficiently guarded against the allurements of love and soft desire. Even now, when I find myself disengaged from every other care, I have the utmost solicitude for your happiness; I am distressed to leave you in this state of infidelity; for this is the last interview we shall have, unless I am permitted to make you a visit from the immortal regions, in order to convince you, that the hopes of Christianity are no delusion.’

‘This proposal,’ said I, ‘charms me; there would be no resisting such evidence. I hope you will prove a ghost of honour, and not fail the assignation, which on my side shall be punctually kept, on condition you appear in open day-light, and dressed in your celestial finery. With these circumstances I may venture to promise you, neither to run away, nor fall into fits. The place of your reception, though not perhaps suitable to your future dignity, shall be a painted alcove, fronting a walk shaded with limes at the end of my brother’s garden.’

‘The gaiety,’ replied Philocles, ‘with which you treat this subject, per-

suades me you have courage enough to be as good as your word; which is the last and only favour I have to ask. I must now bid you farewell, and in the retirement of my closet prepare to make my exit with a fortitude becoming those sacred principles, to which I have adored.’

Here with a tender confusion in his looks, he abruptly left the place, and gave me leisure to reflect on the odd conversation that had passed: but as visionary as some part of it appears, I would fain believe the soft confession he made is no fiction, for I find myself excessively in love; but this shall be a secret to the young enthusiast, till he has got over this splenetick fit, which, as whimsical as it appears, gives me a secret uneasiness: he has certainly infected me with some religious panicks; I have lost my taste for every kind of diversion; company is molesting, and solitude tiresome; self-reflection distracts me; whether I look forward or backward, the prospect is all confusion. But I shall expose myself, by owning these weaknesses to one of your character. Adieu, &c.

LAURA.

LETTER VI.

TO AURELIA.

OH, my Aurelia! I have surprising things to tell you! The lovely Philocles is dead; his presages were too certain: about a week after our last interview, I heard the melancholy tidings, that Sir Harry Lizzard had lost his only son by a sudden death. The charming youth was impatient of mortality, and is gone to converse with his kindred angels.

You will wonder to hear me treat those subjects seriously, which I have till now ridiculed; it is a change that I myself can hardly credit; I never imagined my inclinations were so tenderly engaged, nor that any kind of adversity could have made such an alteration on my temper.

After the first emotions of grief were over, I recollected the appointment we had made, but rather wished than believed such an interview possible; how-

ever, my mind was prepared for conviction; I began to reason with Cato,

——If there’s a Pow’r above,
He must delight in virtue,
And that which he delights in must be happy.

I found myself now interested in the truths of Christianity; the firm belief of a life everlasting would in this exigence have been my greatest consolation; my hopes and fears prevailed by intervals, and kept me in the most tormenting suspense, while I waited for the decisive hour. As soon as it came, without any consternation, I attended at the appointed place.

It was a charming retreat, where art and luxurious nature displayed their various beauties; the evening was still, the sun in golden splendour descending to the western skies, glittered through the





Corbould del.

Isaac Taylor sculp.

the trees: every thing looked gay; new life and beauty appeared on all the vernal prospect; the plants put on a fresher green, the flowers displayed a brighter hue, and diffused ambrosial fragrancy: natured seemed animated with a conscious joy, as gladdened at the approach of some heavenly power.

An unusual alacrity inspired my thoughts, and soothed my soul with a secret delight; while a soft melodious sound, rising by just degrees, filled the region round with transporting harmony.

In the height of these agreeable agitations, as the rosy morning breaks from a cloud, the charming Philocles stood apparent before me: there was something in his aspect so serene and beneficent, such a sweetness and affability, that banished every thought of fear, and filled my breast with divine tranquillity; ineffable pleasure sparkled in his eyes; youth in eternal triumph sat on his brow, and painted his face with a rosy bloom; his temples were circled with a wreath of celestial roses, which were mingled among his flowing hair, with a sort of ornamental negligence.

After a short pause, he began with a voice that would have allayed the anguish of death, and charmed the wildest discord into calm attention; every accent breathed celestial love and harmony, while he described the bowers of bliss, the soft recesses and mansions of immortal pleasure.

But it is impossible for me to paint the beautiful ideas, or imitate the em-

phasis of his language; the powers of eloquence sat on his tongue, and commanded all the motions of my soul, which at that blissful period seemed enlarged in its superior faculties; every word was penetrating and significant; his manner perfectly graceful and transporting; in his descriptions I saw the glories, I felt the joys of immortality. But in the midst of my attention to the sparkling orator, I could not help observing, that he often cast his eye on the shadow of a dial, which was placed on the top of a little marble pedestal, on which, with a becoming gesture, he leaned with his right-hand. I fancied his time was limited; for, at the last glance I saw him cast on the dial, he vanished, and with him all my joys.

This momentary view of celestial beauty has obscured all earthly glory; never will the sun disclose a scene of pleasure to my sight; the vanities which lately amused me, have lost their charms; my thoughts are fixed on superior objects; a divine and immortal ardour inspires my soul, and determines all its motions: with the evidence I now have of a future existence, my notions of happiness are refined and enlarged, my hopes bright and unlimited.

Adieu, my dear Aurelia! I am not without hopes, that this relation will have the same effect on your practice, as the heavenly vision has on that of, Madam, *your most humble servant*,

LAURA.

AMORET TO CORISCA.

FROM the black regions, from the mournful plains,
Where horror in eternal triumph reigns;
From the low caves of Hell, the dens of night,
Far from the frontiers of celestial light;
This from the wretched Amoret receive,
And at my cost these dreadful truths believe:

That 'tis no fiction pious men adore,
But there's indeed a just Almighty Pow'r:
That human spirits after death survive,
And to interminable ages live;
That fields of light, and blest ethereal plains,
Are no conceits of visionary brains:
But there are happy bow'rs and shades of love,
With pure exhaustless springs of joy above;
Immortal crowns the virtuous to reward,
And glorious triumphs for the just prepar'd.

Nor question the surprizing truths I tell,
While I the secrets of the deep reveal:

For Hell is no enthusiastick dream,
No statesman's trick, nor poet's fabulous theme.

No pious fraud or mercenary lye
Of subtle priests, to gain the conscience by;
'Tis all too sadly true which they maintain,
And far beyond what'er the poets feign,
Of streams of liquid fire, and burning lakes,
Infernal gibbets, and eternal racks,
Gorgons, chimeras, furies, and their
snakes;

No mortal can a just conception frame,
Nor find for half the terrors here a name.

Then shun the flow'ry paths that downward tend;
To Hell they lead, and in damnation end:
Fly from the snares of that enchanting sin,
Whose fatal joys have my perdition been.

Like thee, with all the pride of beauty gay,
In loose delights I lately spent the day;

Like

Like thee accomplish'd, and like thee admir'd,
 Mine eyes the savage and polite inspir'd.
 Whene'er I spoke, my wit new conquest won,
 Thousands came here by my soft airs undone.
 With wild surprize my alter'd looks they view,
 And with loud curses still my flight pursue.
 For learn, before too late, licentious fair,
 Each face does here an equal horror wear,
 And, undistinguish'd, youth and age ap-
 pear:

Depriv'd of ev'ry charm, and ev'ry grace,
 We all descend to this detested place.
 Illustrious Helen, once the Grecian pride,
 In folding shades her hated form would hide;
 And conscious Thais fears to be descry'd. }
 I saw them lately by the trembling gleams,
 The pale blue light of inauspicious flames;
 No blushes paint their cheeks, their wanton
 eyes

Nomore with Love's contagious darts surprize.

Rash Cleopatra mourns her hasty doom,
 And glides a hideous spectre thro' the gloom.
 Fam'd Julia through the crowd's no longer
 known,
 Ev'n Ovid's eyes her blasted charms disown.

Curs'd be the arts that did my soul be-
 tray,

And lead my easy virtue first astray:
 'Tis past—and my repentance comes too late;
 But thou may'st yet avoid this cruel fate.
 Perfidious beauty, quit the roads of vice;
 It's smooth descents to certain death entice.

Like Dives, from th' infernal coasts I send,
 To warn my careless unbelieving friend:
 For thou, while yet a lovely guiltless maid,
 To sin, by my example, wast betray'd;
 And should'st thou to these mournful re-
 gions come,

'Twould vastly aggravate my heavy doom.



FINIS.